

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Executive to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 14 July 2010 at 18:15.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 16 June 2010 and 24 June 2010 (attached).
- 3 Public Question Time.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of the Executive are set out in the attachment.
- 5 Southwest One Customer Contact : Development of Customer Access to include 24 hour Automated Telephony Payments. Report of the Southwest One Customer Business Development Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Claire Bramley
- 6 Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013. Report of the Strategy Officer (attached).
Reporting Officer: Lisa Redston
- 7 Update on the Allotments, Green Space, Play Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategies for Taunton Deane Borough Council. Report of the Strategy Officer (attached).
Reporting Officer: Ann Rhodes
- 8 Mercury Filtration and New Cremators at Taunton Deane Crematorium. Report of the Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager and Registrar (attached).
Reporting Officer: Paul Rayson
- 9 Allocation of Growth Points Funding. Joint report of the Project Taunton Director and the Strategic Director (attached).
Reporting Officers: Joy Wishlade
Ian Franklin
- 10 Executive Forward Plan - details of forthcoming items to be considered by the Executive and the opportunity for Members to suggest further items (attached)

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

19 July 2010

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions.

There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions.

Speaking under “Public Question Time” is limited to 4 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chairman will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate.

If a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

This is more usual at meetings of the Council’s Planning Committee and details of the “rules” which apply at these meetings can be found in the leaflet “Having Your Say on Planning Applications”. A copy can be obtained free of charge from the Planning Reception Desk at The Deane House or by contacting the telephone number or e-mail address below.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room.

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk



Lift access to the John Meikle Room and the other Committee Rooms on the first floor of The Deane House, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available off the landing directly outside the Committee Rooms.



An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

For further information about the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01823 356382 or email d.durham@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Executive Members:-

Councillor J Williams - Leader of the Council

Councillor C Herbert

Councillor K Hayward

Councillor J Court-Stenning

Councillor N Cavill

Councillor J Lewin-Harris

Councillor T Hall

Councillor M Edwards

Executive – 16 June 2010

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Cavill, Mrs Court-Stenning, Edwards, Hall, Hayward and Mrs Herbert

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Tonya Meers (Legal and Democratic Services Manager), Maggie Hammond (Strategic Finance and Section 151 Officer), Tim Burton (Growth and Development Manager), Richard Sealy (Client and Performance Manager), Ralph Willoughby-Foster (Planning Policy Advisor), Lesley Webb (Housing Enabling Lead), Dan Webb (Client and Performance Officer), Trevor Miles (Acting Divisional Manager, Southwest One) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager).

Also present: Councillors Coles, Gaines, Morrell, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stuart-Thorn, A Wedderkopp and Mrs Whitmarsh.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

54. Apology

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris.

55. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 28 April 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

56. Public Question Time

Reference Minute No. 47/2010, Councillor Stuart-Thorn reported that he had still not had a response to the question he had raised concerning Councillors being allowed to use vacant spaces in The Deane House Staff Car Park when no spaces were available either in the circle outside the front entrance to the offices or in the Belvedere Road Public Car Park.

The Chairman asked the Chief Executive if a reply could be sent to Councillor Stuart-Thorn as quickly as possible.

57. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Hayward, as someone who lived in a property which overlooked land at Ford Farm, Norton Fitzwarren, declared a prejudicial interest and stated that he would leave the room if any discussion took place on this site in connection with the item covered by Minute No. 58 below.

58. Core Strategy – Interim Sites

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed release of interim

sites at Nerrols, Taunton and at Cades Farm, Wellington to contribute towards the shortfall in the five year supply of housing land in Taunton Deane.

Planning Policy Statement 3:Housing (PPS3) required that Local Planning Authorities should identify and maintain a rolling five year supply of deliverable land for housing. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) had identified separate requirements for Taunton, due to its designation as a Strategically Significant Town or City (SSCT), and for the remainder of Taunton Deane.

The RSS Secretary of State Proposed Changes were 900 dwellings (18,000 dwellings over the period 2006-2026) for Taunton and 190 dwellings (3,800 dwellings over the period 2006-2026) for the rest of the district. The RSS annual housing requirement for Taunton Deane was 1,090 dwellings (or 21,800 dwellings 2006-26).

The Taunton Deane Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was completed in July 2009 and showed 3.12 years supply for Taunton SSCT and 6.84 years supply for the rest of the district. For Taunton Deane the SHLAA showed a 3.74 years supply.

PPS3 stated that in deciding planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:-

- Achieving high quality housing;
- Ensuring developments achieved a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people;
- The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability;
- Using land effectively and efficiently; and
- Ensuring the proposed development was in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in, and the spatial vision for, the area and did not undermine wider policy objectives.

It also stated that where Local Planning Authorities could not demonstrate an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing.

The risk of failing to provide a five year supply of housing land was that planning appeals would be allowed on unplanned, less sustainable sites. As the Core Strategy would not be adopted until September 2011, provision had been made in the Local Development Scheme for the release of "interim sites" following public consultation in 2010 to contribute towards providing a five year supply of housing land for Taunton Deane.

The Minister had recently confirmed that the RSS would be abolished and although it would require legislation, it was no longer considered to be a material consideration.

The studies that informed the draft submitted RSS provided an evidence base for 14,000 new homes in Taunton and 17,300 for the district as a whole. The draft RSS assumed a lower rate of growth for the first half of the plan period to 2026, and this had been used to calculate the current five year supply figures.

Assuming the future scale of growth for Taunton was reduced to the draft RSS figure of 14,000, the Nerrols Interim Site at Taunton would give a 5.07 years supply for Taunton SSCT. A failure to identify a five year supply of housing land for Taunton SSCT would involve a high risk of the current planning application at Maidenbrook, Taunton or the site that was subject to pre-application consultation at Broadlands in Staplehay being allowed on appeal.

Further assuming the future scale of growth for Taunton Deane was reduced from the RSS Proposed Changes level of 21,800 to the draft RSS level of 17,300, the two interim sites recommended (at Nerrols and Cades Farm in Wellington) would provide a 5.67 years supply of housing land for Taunton Deane.

Reported that the number of vacant homes in Taunton Deane was specifically raised at the meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2010. Currently, there were 362 empty homes in Taunton Deane. This was not particularly high and was in line with national rates. Nevertheless, the calculation of housing figures took this figure into account.

The Council had conducted a public consultation exercise during January and February 2010 on the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework (LDF). There was a clear need for urgent action to address the housing land supply situation and four interim sites had originally been identified at:-

- Bishops Hull about 220 dwellings
- Ford Farm, Norton Fitzwarren about 250 dwellings
- Killams, Taunton about 250 dwellings
- Nerrols Farm about 250 dwellings

Detailed information relating to these sites was submitted for the information of Members.

As far as Bishops Hull was concerned, a planning application for 220 dwellings had recently been granted permission subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement. It was therefore considered as a planning commitment and not as part of the release of interim sites.

Despite the completion of the Halse Water Dam, much of Ford Farm was still in flood zone 3 and channel improvements would need to be made before it was reclassified as flood zone 2. The Council could not allocate this development until the channel improvements had been made.

The Community Scrutiny Committee had considered the inclusion of Killams as an Interim Site at its meeting on 26 May 2010. A number of detailed issues were raised and it was resolved that the site should be the subject of a detailed report for consideration at a later date.

With regard to the site at Nerrols, Taunton, the company Entec on behalf of the Crown Estate had reached an advanced stage in their preparations to submit a planning application. They had met with Urban Initiatives to discuss the design of the site and had recently attended meetings with local Councillors and representatives of Parish Councils and were planning pre-application consultation locally.

Concerns had been expressed that a development would impede views and that agricultural land would be lost. An extensive belt of woodland planting was proposed which would ensure that the setting of Cheddon Fitzpaine would be preserved and enhanced.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy had proposed a country park in the core part of the green wedge between Maidenbrook and Allen's Brook and developer contributions would be sought to provide this informal recreational facility. There was also an opportunity to incorporate surface water attenuation and sustainable drainage systems which would create a semi-wetland habitat, which would enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the green wedge.

Transport issues included traffic congestion, pollution and the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. A new distributor road was proposed to connect Nerrols Drive to Cheddon Road and enhanced pedestrian and cycle links would be provided.

The Education Authority had identified capacity issues at Lyngford Park Primary School. Whilst it was unlikely that a new school could be provided at Nerrols, a serviced site could be provided in the first phase, enabling the buildings to follow early in the second phase. A new local centre was proposed as part of the first phase adjoining the existing roundabout at the southern end of Nerrols Drive to provide the community with a range of services and local employment opportunities.

There were no major constraints to development at Nerrols. The developers would be in a position to submit a planning application in July 2010. Nerrols was considered to be a sustainable and deliverable site.

Due to the current positions with regard to the sites at Bishops Hull, Ford Farm, Norton Fitzwarren and Killams a further proposed interim site had been considered at Cades Farm, Wellington.

The Taunton Deane Local Plan had allocated a site for about 250 dwellings at Cades Farm which was now being developed. 87 dwellings had been completed and an application for a further 110 had been submitted.

The summary of consultation to the Core Strategy proposals for Wellington had shown that there was general support for the strategic sites identified in Wellington.

The response on Cades Farm had suggested surface water attenuation to reduce flood risk, allotments or community orchards, high standards of design and sustainability and cycle/pedestrian links with the town centre should be as direct as possible. Also a primary school should be provided at Cades Farm to maximise opportunities for 'non-car' travel modes.

Noted that these comments were supported. The Council's strategy to reduce flood risk was to incorporate major surface water attenuation into green infrastructure that centred on existing watercourses.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy had concluded that the eastern part of Wellington was deficient in accessible green space and suggested that a new green space be created. This could incorporate surface water attenuation, allotments, community orchard and recreation opportunities to provide a new green wedge between the residential areas of the town and the Westpark Industrial Estate. A larger scale of development would however be required to justify the provision of a new primary school.

There were no major constraints to development at Cades Farm. A first phase could provide 300 dwellings and it was likely developers would be in a position to submit a planning application later in the year. Cades Farm was therefore considered as a sustainable and deliverable site which should be included as one of the interim sites.

Resolved that the release of interim sites for 300 dwellings each at Nerrols, Taunton and Cades Farm, Wellington to contribute towards the shortfall in the five years supply of housing land in Taunton Deane, be agreed.

59. **Proposed regeneration of part of the Halcon Estate, Taunton**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning proposals to regenerate part of the Halcon Estate in Taunton namely Moorland Road, Valley Road, Beadon Road and part of Creechbarrow Road.

Halcon North stood on 7.25 hectares of housing land. There were 192 houses and flats which were mainly semi-detached brick houses, with a further 31 properties in private ownership. There were 96 two bed houses and 28 two bed flats. There were few four or five bed houses, a third of which had been sold under the Right to Buy scheme. There were 30 three bed houses for rent and 10 which had been sold. The high percentage of two bed houses contributed to overcrowding, which had had an adverse effect on the children and their health. The majority of properties had large gardens.

For several decades the Council had committed significant funding for maintenance and improvement to the fabric of the houses in Halcon. Although such works had continued, the age of the buildings required ever increasing funding in order to keep pace with the rate of decline.

With the delivery of Affordable Housing through Section 106 Agreements on the decline and funding from the Homes and Communities Agency being currently at risk, discussions had taken place to look for a way forward to provide the regeneration of the area. The vision for Halcon was to make the area a place where people wanted to live and where residents were no longer disadvantaged economically, socially or in their health.

Reported that an architect had been asked to look at the area with a view to creating a new community to include a mix of all tenures, a church, a community hall,

allotments, green open space and possibly an Anaerobic Digester which could provide heat and power for the community.

A Concept was produced, which gave an indication of what could fit onto the cleared site. This was used to demonstrate the possibilities of the proposals to all the political groups and subsequently the Halcon Multi-Agency Group who unanimously supported the proposals.

A consultation was then arranged for the tenants and residents affected by the proposals. This was well attended by 120 people and the questions that were asked were reported. Whilst some residents found it difficult to express their views at the consultation event, it was subsequently felt that the proposals were welcomed by many of the residents.

A further consultation was held for residents of the wider area of Halcon and observations centred around the effects of dust, owner occupiers not wanting to sell their homes and the effects that the proposed development could have on children with asthma.

This part of Halcon featured in the top 10% of the most deprived wards in the country. Although good work had been going on for many years from a range of agencies, the deprivation indices had shown no improvement.

Housing was deemed to be a significant issue, not because of its fabric but due to the high level of small two bedroom accommodation, which was resulting in overcrowding, leading in turn to other social problems. Much of the housing was in the Council's ownership however, it was difficult to let vacancies in this area as people, generally, did not wish to live there.

In order to deliver this project, it was recognised that a multi-agency approach was needed together with the full involvement of the community.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The initiation of this proposal as a formal project of the Council be approved, taking into account the fact that no final or binding decisions could be made without further reports to Scrutiny and the Executive;
- (2) It be recognised that further consultations during the next period would be required and an ongoing close working relationship with the tenants and residents would need to be maintained;
- (3) Necessary financial resources be identified as required for consultancy work subject to a further report to, and decisions of, the Executive;
- (4) Reports to Members be made on a regular basis to keep them informed of progress; and
- (5) It be noted that the Council was committed to the regeneration of the Halcon Estate, Taunton to improve the health and well-being of people living in the locality.

60. **Treasury Management Outturn 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 Update**

Submitted report previously circulated, which detailed the treasury management activities for 2009/2010 and the current position to date for the 2010/2011 financial year.

The Council's Debt, as at 31 March 2010, continued to stand at £15,000,000.

It was noted that the Bank of England had maintained the low interest rate of 0.5% during the whole of 2009/2010. This had been to aid stability to the economy during the recession.

A short-term £6,000,000 borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) had fallen payable in November 2009. This was replaced with one year variable rate borrowing from the PWLB.

Noted that the average consolidated rate of interest on the total portfolio for 2009/2010 was 4.27%.

Reported that the level of investments outstanding at 31 March 2010 amounted to £8,600,000. The average range of interest rates achieved during 2009/2010 was 0.25% - 6.38%. Interest earned on these investments amounted to £173,000 of which approximately £138,000 was allocated to the General Fund, and the balance to the Housing Revenue Account.

Further reported that for the current year interest rates were predicted to slowly rise towards the end of the year, although the Government's emergency Budget on 22 June 2010 was an unknown factor which could have an impact on rates.

On the advice of the Council's treasury advisors, the current lending policy was to ensure the liquidity and preservation of principal. As a consequence, the Council was not assuming returns in excess of the current budget.

The short term variable rate loan of £6,000,000 would be repaid to the PWLB in November 2010. As at 3 June 2009, sums totalling £19,000,000 had been invested at interest rates ranging from 0.75% - 1.85%.

Resolved that the treasury management outturn for 2009/2010 and the position to date for 2010/2011 be noted.

61. **Climate Change – Revenue contribution to Capital**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed replacement of the gas boilers at The Deane House.

In April 2010 the Executive approved the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan (Minute No 50/2010 refers), which in this year was aimed at delivering on the 10:10 challenge.

The Plan included the replacement of the old gas fired boilers at The Deane House with more modern, high efficiency gas boilers at a cost of approximately £55,000.

The funding for the replacement boilers (and associated zoning of the heating system) was available within the existing Climate Change revenue budget. However, the boiler replacement was a capital project.

It was therefore proposed to transfer the funding from revenue to capital.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to authorise a Revenue Contribution to Capital of £55,000 to enable the funding of replacement gas boilers at The Deane House, in line with the Council's agreed Carbon Reduction Plan.

62. **Asset Management Plan**

Considered report previously submitted, concerning the Council's Asset Management Plan.

The Council was required to have an Asset Management Plan which set out how it intended to manage its major assets. The plan would enable a strategic view to be taken in decision making on its assets base to further the Council's policy and service delivery objectives. It was designed to encourage efficient use of assets and the capital tied-up in them.

The Council had 284 property assets in its operational and non-operational portfolios and these had been valued for balance sheet purposes at £64,000,000. In addition, there were 6,078 dwellings and 1,496 garages that were held in the Housing Revenue Account. Their current value was £318,800,000.

A copy of the Plan was submitted for the information of Members of the Executive.

Resolved that the Asset Management Plan be adopted as the strategic plan to assist both Members and Officers in giving consideration to land and property in support of the Council's key priorities.

63. **Performance Monitoring – Outturn Report 2009/2010**

Considered report previously circulated, which outlined the final performance data of the Council for the 2009/2010 financial year.

The monitoring of the Corporate Strategy, service delivery, performance indicators and budgets was an important part of the overall performance management framework.

A new Performance 'Scorecard' had been developed to monitor and manage the performance of all Council services, and was introduced in Quarter 3, 2009/2010 (Minute No. 34/2010 refers). This scorecard was designed to be simple to use and to reduce the size of performance reports.

Following submission of the Quarter 3 report and scorecard, feedback was gained from the Corporate Management Team, the Executive and the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the following improvements had been made for the Quarter 4 (Outturn) scorecard:-

- More 'signposting' to avoid too much detail on the scorecard;

- The alerts were more logical; and
- The reason for Amber and Red alerts were more clearly identified.

Reported that a high level summary of successes and/or improvements included:-

- National Non Domestic Rate debit collection exceeded target and improved on last year;
- a new Economic Development Strategy had been adopted;
- a significant decrease in serious acquisitive crime in Taunton Deane;
- a significant increase in visits to leisure centres and successful first year of the Free Swimming initiative;
- Carbon Management Plan completed;
- 96% of calls to the Customer Contact Centre were resolved at the first point of contact;
- Speed in processing planning applications ('minor' and 'other' applications);
- 90% satisfaction of businesses with regulation services (Environmental Health service);
- 'Street Scene' indicators (such as litter, detritus, graffiti, fly-posting, fly-tipping) had all improved on last year; and
- 'Sort It Plus' rolled out across Taunton Deane.

Further reported that areas off course included Council Tax collection rates, procurement benefits, Housing Rent collection, the overall employment rate in Taunton Deane had decreased significantly, additional homes provided and affordable homes delivered both significantly missed target due to the economic downturn, household waste levels and recycling had missed target, the speed of processing 'major' planning applications and planning appeals allowed, Environmental Health inspections (licensing and health and safety) and Southwest One failed to achieve nine KPI targets (4%) during 2009/2010.

Noted that the scorecard also detailed the actions that had been, or would be, put in place in an attempt to improve current performance.

Resolved that the report be noted.

64. **2009/2010 Budget Outturn Report**

Considered report previously circulated, on the outturn position of the Council on revenue and capital expenditure for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and trading services for 2009/2010.

A key feature of well-regarded Councils was their ability to manage performance effectively. Effective financial management therefore formed an important part of the Council's overall performance management framework

The outturn position reported for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund (GF) contained some estimated figures for Government subsidies on Housing and Council Tax Benefit. The final figures for these would not be available in time for the final accounts to be produced.

Should the final figures differ significantly from those used in closing down the accounts for 2009/2010, a further report would be presented to Members giving the

updated position on subsidy and the implications for the Council's reserves.

The following outturn figures would therefore be used to prepare the Council's Statement of Accounts, which would be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee on 28 June 2010.

There had been a number of significant challenges faced by the Council this year, and these had had an impact on the overall financial position for the authority. These included:-

- The general economic climate and the recession in the United Kingdom, which had been the worst seen in this country for 60 years;
- Major changes within the Council's organisation with the ongoing review of the Core Council structure; and
- The implementation of a new finance system and changes in ways of working as part of the wider business transformation programme.

The above issues had impacted on the Council's services and financial performance in a variety of ways. However, the Council had continued to operate within the framework of its Budget Strategy and the overall financial standing at the end of the financial year was sound.

Regular budget monitoring information had been presented to Members, with quarterly performance reports submitted to the Executive and the Corporate Scrutiny Committee during the year.

The following provided a summary of the 2009/2010 outturn and reserves position for GF and HRA services:-

- (1) The 2009/2010 Provisional GF Revenue Outturn was a deficit of £10,100, which represented an underspend of £8,500 against the Final Budget for the year. General Fund Reserves as at 31 March 2010 stood at £1,564,000 (subject to audit). This was above the minimum reserves expectation within the Council's Budget Strategy;
- (2) The 2009/2010 GF Capital Programme total expenditure for the year amounted to £4,562,000, which was £1,925,000 below the total budget for the year. The underspend in the year was predominantly due to slippage, with officers requesting that £1,027,000 was carried forward to the 2010/2011 Capital Programme budget. The Council had made good use of external funding to support its capital investment not least related to Project Taunton;
- (3) The HRA Outturn for 2009/2010 was £963,000 below budget. This was largely due to underspend on maintenance (asbestos and exterior high-level work). The HRA Reserves position (or "working balance") carried forward into 2010/11 was therefore a credit of £2,685,000 (subject to audit);
- (4) HRA Capital Programme total expenditure in 2009/2010 totalled £5,142,000, related largely to the Council's continued investment in Decent Homes. This outturn resulted in underspend against the HRA Capital Programme budget for the year of £1,582,000;

- (5) The Deane DLO had made a provisional overall trading surplus of £355,500; and
- (6) The Deane Helpline had made a trading deficit in the year of £102,500.

Reported that overall, the outturn performance was a marginal improvement on the position reported in the Quarter 3 forecast reported to the Executive in early March 2010.

The reported outturn position remained subject to external audit as part of the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts.

During the discussion of this item it was reported that, subject to a Supplementary Estimate being agreed by Full Council, funding was to be made available to enable the Council to enter a display in this year's Taunton Flower Show.

Resolved that:-

- (a) the draft outturn position for General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital budgets for 2009/2010 be noted; and
- (b) Full Council be recommended to approve:-
 - (i) the net transfer of £856,000 to earmarked reserves for use on General Fund Services and £513,000 to earmarked reserves for use on Housing Revenue Account Services, in 2010/2011 or later years, as set out in the report;
 - (ii) the Carry Forward of General Fund Capital Programme Budget totalling £1,026,580 for slippage into 2010/2011 and the carry forward of Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Budget of £1,497,820 for slippage into 2010/2011 as set out in the report; and
 - (iii) a Supplementary Estimate of £8,500 within the Leisure Portfolio for entry in the Taunton Flower Show in 2010, to be funded by a one-off transfer from the Deane DLO Trading Account Earmarked Reserve in 2010/2011; and that funding for entry in the Show in future years be considered as part of budget setting for 2011/2012.

(Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a member of the Taunton Flower Show. She also declared a prejudicial interest, as her husband was currently the Vice-Chairman of the Flower Show Committee, and left the meeting before any discussion on this topic took place.)

65. **Executive Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

Noted that the special meeting of the Executive which had been scheduled to take place immediately before the meeting of Full Council on 13 July 2010 would not now be taking place.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.)

Executive – 24 June 2010

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Cavill, Mrs Court-Stenning, Edwards, Hall, Hayward and Mrs Herbert

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Tonya Meers (Legal and Democratic Services Manager), Maggie Hammond (Strategic Finance and Section 151 Officer), Paul Rayson (Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager), Tim Burton (Growth and Development Manager), James Barrah (Community Services Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager).

Also present: Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Bishop, Brooks, Coles, Mrs Copley, Critchard, Denington, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Guerrier, Henley, C Hill, House, Miss James, R Lees, McMahan, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, O'Brien, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stuart-Thorn, Thorne, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Mrs Whitmarsh and Mrs Wilson.
Mr Robin Tebbutt, Executive Director (Finance), Housing Quality Network and Mrs Anne Elder, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

66. Apology

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris.

67. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One.

68. Review of Cemetery and Crematorium Fees and Charges

Considered report previously circulated, concerning proposed changes to some of the Cemetery and Crematorium Fees and Charges.

Discussions had recently taken place with local funeral directors about the service provided by the Council. A number of improvements had been identified, most of which should result in an increase in the use of the Crematorium.

The areas of change were:-

- (a) Removal of the 4 pm surcharge to help the service become more competitive;
- (b) The introduction of three early times for the delivery of the deceased at a reduced cremation fee without any form of service;
- (c) The removal of double burial fees for non-residents;
- (d) The reduction of the Saturday Cremation fee from £1,100 to £800;
- (e) The addition of a Saturday Burial fee when a Saturday burial is provided; and

(f) The reduction in the Additional Service Time fee.

The proposed changes would enable the service to become more competitive, offer a better service to the funeral directors and make better use of resources.

In addition it was predicted that the overall level of income could rise by as much as £13,000 per annum.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to adopt the amendments to the Cemetery and Crematorium fees and charges outlined in the report.

69. **Revised Charges for Pre-Planning Advice**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning proposed revisions to charges made for pre-planning advice.

The Council had charged for providing pre-planning advice for a number of years. By seeking such advice, members of the public and developers were able to ascertain whether there was a likelihood of planning permission being granted. However this did not commit the Council to a subsequent decision if an application was submitted.

Noted that it was important the charges levied were not so high as to discourage engagement with the Council. The charges had traditionally been set with this in mind rather than to recover the full cost of providing the service. This remained the case with the following changes:-

Level 1 – Householder, Advertisement and Landscape advice. Tree Preservation Orders and Listed Buildings (in cases where planning permission was also required):-

Written Advice	-	£50 + VAT @ 17.5% = £58.75
Meeting with note	-	£70 + VAT @ 17.5% = £82.25

Level 2 – all other and Minor developments (for example less than 10 dwellings, 1000 sq ft industrial):-

Written Advice	-	£90 + VAT @ 17.5% = £105.75
Meeting with note	-	£130 + VAT @ 17.5% = £152.75

Level 3 – Major developments (for example more than 10 dwellings, 1,000 sq ft industrial):-

Written Advice	-	£160 + VAT @ 17.5% = £180.00
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Meetings for major applications (level 3) were currently charged at £75 + VAT per hour. However, it was felt that it would be fairer and easier to charge a flat rate as for other proposals. It was proposed to set this at £200 + VAT @ 17.5% which amounted to £235 in total.

No objections had been received from the Council's Planning Agents Forum on these proposals.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to adopt the proposed changes to the charges relating to pre-application Planning advice.

60. **Housing Revenue Account Reform : Council Housing – A Real Future - Prospectus**

Submitted report previously circulated, concerning the proposed response to the consultation "Council Housing: A Real Future – Prospectus", which had been issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Chairman introduced Mr Robin Tebbutt from the Housing Quality Network, who gave Members a detailed presentation on the DCLG's proposals.

Every Local Authority with Council housing had to maintain a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was a ring-fenced account. It could not therefore be subsidised by Council Tax or be used to keep Council Tax levels down.

The current HRA subsidy system was the national redistribution of revenue from Councils that were deemed to have surplus income to those Councils that were deemed to not have enough. The HRA subsidy was the difference between assessed rent and assessed expenditure.

The current subsidy supported a minority of Councils in servicing their historic housing debt. In 2010/2011, Taunton Deane Borough Council would be paying £6,000,000 to the Government in the form of 'negative subsidy'.

The Government did not pay out all the money it received. In the 2009/2010 financial year, the subsidy system nationally made a surplus amounting to £229,000,000. As well as this, the HRA subsidy system had a number of other serious faults, for example:-

- The annual nature of determinations, even under the three year spending review, made it difficult to undertake any serious long-term planning and develop housing investment strategies;
- It offered limited local autonomy; and
- The system had removed the clear link between rents paid and services provided locally.

The intention of the review being undertaken by the DCLG was aimed at dismantling the existing subsidy system and replacing it with a localised system of self-financing for all Councils. The Government's self-financing option, outlined in its consultation paper and prospectus, involved re-allocating the national housing debt by offering Local Authorities a debt settlement which they would then be responsible for servicing. A series of questions was set out in the prospectus upon which responses were sought.

The Housing Quality Network (HQN) had been asked to evaluate the potential impact of the proposal and it was suggested that if Taunton Deane opted to join the self financing system, it was likely the Council would be allocated additional debt of £86,000,000. The cost of servicing the debt would be ring-fenced to the HRA, but the need to pay £6,000,000 of negative HRA subsidy to the Government would be removed.

The figures provided were subject to confirmation as part of the next Government Spending Review and HQN had therefore advised that the Council's response should state that it was on the basis of the figures set out in the prospectus.

Reported that it was intended that self-financing in the future would be achieved by a one off financial arrangement that calculated the spending requirement for each Council. For Taunton Deane, the opening debt settlement was shown as £116,000,000. Councils could borrow up to the level in the settlement, which allowed for additional borrowing without forcing up overall public spending.

The only income assumed in the prospectus was rent and Councils would need to adhere to National Rent Policy. Housing Benefit would only be paid to the level commensurate with this policy.

Research had shown that nationally, the HRA system had been under-funding maintenance and management costs. Under the proposals, the Council would have an overall 12.9% increase in overall expenditure.

The Council had met the Decent Homes Standard, but there were a number of properties that still required 'decent homes work' at an estimated cost of £2,750,000. The prospectus acknowledged that the settlement would not address this backlog and that further analysis of this issue needed to be undertaken.

Under self-financing, Councils would retain 100% of capital receipts, with the expectation that 75% would be used for affordable housing and regeneration.

Debt would be allocated using the Subsidy Capital Financing Requirement which currently formed part of the subsidy system calculation:-

Amount of debt HRA can service under proposals	£116,294,00
Amount of debt currently recognised by subsidy	£30,585,000
Amount of additional 'settlement' debt under proposals	£85,709,000
Current actual HRA debt (2010/11)	£14,451,000
Actual HRA debt under proposals	£100,160,000

These figures would give Taunton Deane some leeway for further borrowing, however, rigorous testing would have to be carried out to ensure it could be afforded.

The prospectus asked if Councils were in favour of a self-financing HRA, or the continuation of the existing arrangements. The Government expected Councils to test the opening debt figure proposed under self-financing in a local business plan which reflected local information about actual income, spending needs and

borrowing costs. A number of factors would have an effect on the borrowing profile in these individual business plans, which included:-

- Interest rates on existing and new debt;
- Investment needs and the timing of this spend;
- The difference between current actual housing debt held by a Council and the level of debt supported by the subsidy system; and
- Capital receipts and any HRA reserves which could be used to supplement the revenue in the business plans.

On the basis of a £86,000,000 debt settlement, Taunton Deane would be in a position to repay it and would have scope for additional investment in the stock over the term of a plan. The responses to the questions set out in the prospectus had therefore been drafted on this basis.

The self-financing system had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2010 where it was felt the benefits of the Government's proposals outweighed the risks. The comments of the Tenant Services Management Board were also submitted.

Resolved that:-

- (a) the proposed responses to the Department of Communities and Local Government's Consultation Paper set out in the Appendix to these minutes be supported; and
- (b) Full Council be recommended to approve these responses.

61. **Executive Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.19 pm.)

Appendix

Council Housing: A Real Future

Consultation Response

Q1 What are your views on the proposed methodology for assessing income and spending needs under Self Financing and for valuing each council's business?

Our broad view is that the proposed methodology provides a reasonable approach for valuing the housing business. With the uplifts to management and maintenance and major repairs allowances and the proposed 6.5% discount rate, self financing will provide a basis for a viable HRA Business Plan.

Q2 What are your views on the proposals for financial, regulatory and accounting framework for self financing?

We support the proposal for local authorities to report on a separate housing balance sheet and to introduce a separation of the loans pool between the HRA and the General Fund for accounting purposes. This is on the proviso that in practice funds would be managed jointly so that the costs and income potential from our treasury decisions are not adversely affected by this change. This will have the advantage of making the results of investment decisions in the respective areas more transparent. However, we need to go through this in more detail and undertake due diligence in relation to the accounting.

We also welcome the further clarification of the accounting treatment of core, core plus and non-core services.

Whilst Taunton Deane Borough Council is already accounting for expenditure appropriately between the HRA and the General Fund, revised guidance on the operation of the HRA ring fence will improve comparability of actual costs between local authorities.

Q3 How much new supply could the settlement enable you to deliver, if combined with social housing grant?

We are cautiously optimistic that there may be scope for additional new supply, subject to effective running of our business plan for at least 4 years from the onset and the availability of land.

We have modelled a scheme based on 120 new units assuming a 30% grant rate from the Homes and Communities Agency over years 4 to 9 of our business plan and 80 new units assuming a 0% grant rate over years 4 to 9 of our business plan.

Q4 Do you favour a self-financing system for council housing or the continuation of a nationally redistributive subsidy system?

On the basis of the proposals Taunton Deane Borough Council favours a self-financing system.

Q5 Would you wish to proceed to early voluntary implementation of self-financing on the basis of the methodology and principles proposed in this document? Would

you be ready to implement self-financing in 2011/2012? If not, how much time do you think is required to prepare for implementation?

Moving to early voluntary implementation of self financing based upon the information currently provided is supported subject to obtaining full and acceptable financial details and resolution of the issues raised within our replies to the other consultation questions.

Implementation in 2011/2012 would be feasible subject to early receipt of final acceptable details from the government and conclusion of the financing arrangements.

The earliest possible confirmation, even if final implementation is delayed, or a clear statement that self financing on the basis of the proposals is going to happen, will allow us to secure the best terms on loans in the intervening period.

Q6 If you favour self-financing but do not wish to proceed on the basis of the proposals in this document, what are the reasons?

Taunton Deane Borough Council does favour self financing and would like to move to an early implementation of the system.

Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors

Executive

- **Employee of Somerset County Council – Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning**

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 14 July 2010

Southwest One Customer Contact: Development of Customer Access to include 24 hour Automated Telephony Payments

Report of Southwest One Customer Contact Business Development Manager – Claire Olohan-Bramley

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Hall, Portfolio Holder for Resources)

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report is to request approval be given for Southwest One to investigate the implementation of a 24-hour, 365 days automated telephone payments solution

2. Background

- 2.1. The Customer Access Strategy adopted by the Authority on 24 August 2005 stated that customers wanted both “Contact when it was convenient to them” and “Easy methods of contact to suit them”. Since moving into the Southwest One partnership, a new citizen portal plus an integrated CRM system have been implemented which provide customers with enhanced access to services and the ability to obtain information electronically whenever required. In addition, by developing a new portal, we have seen that deeper self serve is important to delivering this Customer Access Strategy.
- 2.2. Customer Contact have now embarked on a programme of work to develop and improve customer access further and make the CSA (Customer Service Advisor) experience more interactive, effective and rewarding. This programme includes developing further customers understanding of what we can deliver electronically via the citizen portal 24 hours a day plus the viability of providing a simple way of taking payments via the telephone outside our traditional working hours of 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday.
- 2.3. In addition to providing a more comprehensive method of making payment for those who simply wish to pay and have no queries, we have been determining the best way forward for taking payments in line with the new Payment Card Industry (PCI) debit card standards. These standards state that encrypting phone call recordings (as we currently do) will no longer be an acceptable method of protecting customers payment card details.
- 2.4. At present, payments are taken by CSAs for a variety of services including:
 - *Council Tax*
 - *Housing Rent*

- *PCNs (Penalty Charge Notices for Parking etc)*
- *Waste – Bulky Waste, Garden Bins, Garden Sacks, Additional Bins*

3. Southwest One Proposal

- 3.1. Customer Contact have undertaken some initial work to look at both the customer experience and that of our highly trained Customer Service Advisors, who would benefit from having time released from taking standard payment calls both by being able to invest time in further training, plus protecting them from the risk of being challenged over the security of payment card data. There are two main options available to the Contact Centre – both based on forms of IVR (Interactive Voice Recognition) – one a traditional “Press 1 for ..” followed by a series of push button commands and the second a fully voice recognised system with push buttons for entering card details only.
- 3.2. If the system proved to be cost effective (cost borne by SWOne not TDBC), we would plan to implement initially on the Council Tax and Payments lines, moving to the main 356356 number if the system proved successful. Customers phoning to simply make a payment would be given the option of using the automated system, during standard working hours should there be a problem with the payment, customers would have the option, during the automated call, of speaking to a CSA to help guide them through.
- 3.3. At the same time, to meet PCI standards, we would also plan to retrain CSAs to move the payment element of ANY call to the automated service, once queries have been resolved or orders taken (e.g., provide information about CTAX account, order garden waste collection etc). As no element of the automated payment system is recorded, TDBC and SWOne would be fully compliant with the new standards.
- 3.4. Attached as an Appendix is a case study on Swale Borough Council who have recently implemented such a service.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The Executive is asked to consider the content of the report and Appendix and support the proposed development.

Contact

Officer: Claire Olohan-Bramley, Business Development Manager, Customer Contact
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 E-mail: c.bramley@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Case Study on Swale Borough Council

Case Study: Public Sector

Swale Borough Council introduces 24 x 7 Council Tax Payment Service for its residents

Telephonetics vip
making sound business sense

Meeting revenue collection targets whilst ensuring high levels of customer satisfaction are two key challenges affecting Local Authority Council Tax departments today. With rising customer expectations and the need to provide increased access to services, outside of standard office hours - how can Swale Borough Council meet its targets, maintain high satisfaction levels and ensure accessibility?



Swale has a prime location, within 40 miles of London and the Channel ports, but set in the Kentish countryside. Swale Borough Council serves a population of 123,000 people, encompassing the towns of Faversham, Sheerness and Sittingbourne. The council believes in working in partnership with its customers and constantly strives to improve its services. "Ambitions for Swale" is the strategic plan to transform Swale into "one of the best places in Britain in which to live, work, learn and invest".

Key technology foundations have been laid to enable Swale to support its ongoing commitment to transformational change. Together with IT, Customer Services have developed core skills and Swale's Customer Service Centre (CSC) now delivers more than 100 services to its community.

The Challenge

Swale's Council Tax section is responsible for the billing and collection of council tax from over 50,000 properties, with front office services providing payment options. In a cost saving efficiency measure the authority

closed three cash offices leaving residents with the option to pay over the phone via a live agent in their contact centre. This sharply increased the number of incoming calls to front office staff taking credit or debit card payments for council tax.

Consequently the Swale customer service team's call handling was stretched to capacity and the time they have to handle other customer service tasks was decreasing.

Following a review of service delivery, senior managers agreed that an automated, secure extended payment telephone service should be provided similar to the one that is available over the council web site. The solution should allow 24 x 7 payments, operating during and outside of office hours. It should also offer increased card security and assist the department in meeting its collection targets. In addition, management wanted to create capacity within the department to handle more complex customer requests.

“Residents have quickly adopted the automated payment line seeing a success of almost 25% of all payment calls being handled in the first 5 months.”



The Solution

On 1st April 2009, Swale introduced the Telephonetics VIP speech automated payment service to allow customers to make payments over the phone 24 x 7. The service accepts various card types and callers are easily and simply routed through the system.

Launched with the minimum of marketing, residents have quickly adopted the automated payment line seeing a success of almost 25% of all payment calls being handled within the first 5 months.

The graph shows the current trend of Swale's payment channel. Front office employees were taking the majority of calls, however since March, when the new Telephonetics VIP Payments solution was installed, the number of residents opting to pay via the automated payment line increased, freeing up live agents to focus on more complex calls.

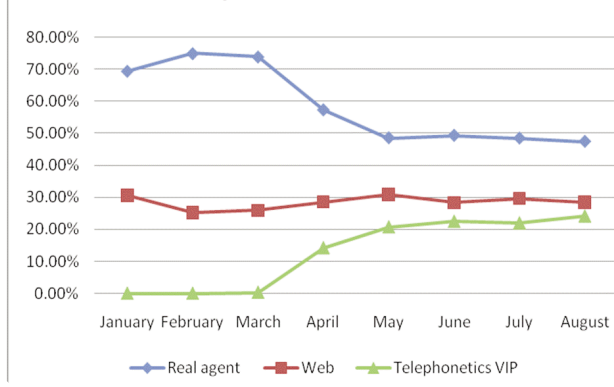
Telephonetics VIP deploy technologically-advanced telephony systems that deliver real business benefits to our customers. Our solutions are developed with 15 years of solid performance delivery - 550 installations, and over 50 million scrutinised calls.

Our market-tailored speech solutions work to provide assistance in demanding environments, providing speech self-service, call steering, mobility, outbound messaging and business continuity. Whether you need a solution to automate the payment of council tax or parking charges, to allow the reporting of a missed dustbin collection or an abandoned vehicle, we have the solution to meet your needs.

At a time when everybody's talking about value, beyond simply cutting costs – we can play our part in making your existing budgets work more effectively.

**Learn more -
call 01442 242 242 and say
"Speech matters"**

**Swale Borough Council
Payment Channel Use**



put through to a Council Tax Officer. These fallback calls are handled internally via a whisper transfer, (a member of staff is given the account number and reason for the transfer before the customer is connected).

This ensures that the customer does not have to repeat the information they have already provided.

**Telephonetics VIP
How we make a difference**

- **Improved customer service**
Residents can call in 24 x 7 and make a payment
- **User friendly**
Quick and simple to use
- **Manages traffic peaks**
Handles routine calls politely and consistently, reducing queuing times
- **Data Security**
Secure encrypted data collection
- **Single, easy to promote contact number**
- **Peace of mind**
Real time confirmation of financial transaction
- **Staff involvement**
During office hours, calls can be transferred to a member of staff in the Council Tax department, as necessary
- **Removes mundane tasks**
Allowing members of staff to focus on and prioritise their workload.

➤ Residents no longer have to hold and be put in a queue to make a payment, instead they instantly dial into the speech recognition system and a payment can be completed in record time. There is also the added security of keying in card details as opposed to saying them out loud, removing the risk of being overheard, thus improving data security.

Whilst on the call, the flexible system allows customers to check the amount of council tax owing, decide on the amount they wish to pay, or even make a part payment. Using the Payments solution removes the need to speak with a person, which in times of financial difficulty takes away any embarrassment an individual may feel around the level of payment they are able to make.

Following a payment, a transaction number is allocated which is read back to the customer and the backend system is then immediately updated; helping with back office reporting. During the call, if a bank card fails or a balance needs to be queried, the customer is

The Future

Dave Thomas, Head of ICT and Customer Service, Swale Borough Council comments: "As each month passes we have seen an increase in the use of our new automated payment line which in turn releases valuable time for our Customer Service Advisers to speak with customers on more complex and personalised issues, resulting in a better service. Feedback we have had both internally and from our customers shows that the new system has been very positively received."

"At present we use this system for the payment of council tax and business rates and now due to its success, we would like to further expand its use to incorporate the payment of parking fines, Housing Benefit overpayments and invoices too."



Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 14 July 2010

Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013

Report of the Strategy Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Cllr Lewin-Harris)

1. Executive Summary

This report presents the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) 2010-13, providing direction for the Council on how to will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination. The CES sets the councils objectives for proactively closing gaps in inequalities for the Councils service users and employees. The Executive is requested to approve the Corporate Equality Scheme, for adoption by Full Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 Legislation requires public bodies to produce a Race Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme. Rather than produce three separate schemes the CES brings these requirements into one comprehensive document.
- 2.2 The proposed CES 2010-2013 is a revision of the CES 2007-2010. Legislation requires the Council to refresh its equality objectives every three years.
- 2.3 The CES 2010-2013 describes our achievements to date, the requirements of the Equality legislation and our Equality and Diversity aims for the future.
- 2.4 The purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) is to:
 - Demonstrate the need to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the needs of service users and employees
 - Pull together the Council's commitments to equality
 - Provide direction for the Council and Service Managers and Employees through clear equality objectives
 - Provide the basis for meaningful actions (to be embedded within individual Service Plans) to ensure delivery of Council services in

an equitable way

- Set out how the Council will meet its statutory public duties.
- 2.5** New legislation, namely the Equality Act 2010, pulls together all current equality legislation and places statutory public duties on Local Authorities to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of

- Disability
- Gender
- Ethnicity or national origin
- Sexuality
- Age
- Religion
- Transgender status

The CES also sets out how the authority will also consider issues specific to those living in rural and deprived areas, carers and any other group of people that may face disadvantage due to their individual circumstances

- 2.6** The Somerset Chief Executives Group has agreed that all Local Authorities within Somerset should reach 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government by 2011. The achievement of the CES objectives will ensure that the Council achieves this target.
- 2.7** The Borough Council now takes the approach that Equalities and Diversity should be mainstreamed within all service areas and should not be the sole responsibility of one officer.
- 2.8** The draft Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013 reflects this approach and the proposed objectives aim to support the mainstreaming of Equalities throughout the Borough Council's services, policies and decision making processes.
- 2.9** Community Scrutiny considered the CES on 18th March, feedback was positive, with a few minor alterations to wording. These matters have now been addressed.
- 2.10** The CES has since been through a period of public consultation, feedback was largely positive from both members of the public and partner organisations.

3. Corporate Equality Scheme Objectives

- 3.1** Following Member, manager and service user involvement, the CES has been revised to:

- Put the emphasis back onto individual service areas to understand their service and non service users, and to recognise the diverse needs of our communities.
- Ensure services understand how they may be delivering unequal outcomes and to address these inequalities.
- Recognise inequalities faced by staff and prospective employees and to address these inequalities.
- Replace service based objectives and actions with Corporate Actions to mainstream Equalities throughout all of the Borough Council's services, functions and decision making.
- Reduce the number of objectives and actions to allow for manageable monitoring of progress.
- Align the objectives with the Equality Framework for Local Government and Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Address the further duties placed on the Council by the Equality Act 2010

3.2 Six objectives have been agreed within the Corporate Equality Scheme. These are detailed in the attached Scheme on pages 10 and 11.

4. Delivering the CES objectives

4.1 The objectives will be implemented through Equality Action Plans. Individual Services will produce Equality Action Plans and include these in their Service Plans. The actions within these plans will be identified from the following:

- Objectives within the Corporate Equality Scheme
- Results of equality impact assessments
- Listening to the views expressed by service users, non service users, staff and key stakeholders

4.2 Corporate Aims Delivery Plans (CAD plans required to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy) will also include Equality Risks and take direction from the CES.

5. Performance Monitoring

5.1 Service Plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure that the CES objectives are being delivered.

5.2 The Corporate Aims Delivery Plans will be monitored to ensure Equality Risks are assessed and that actions work towards achieving the objectives of the Corporate Equality Scheme.

5.3 Performance reports will be submitted to Members and the Corporate Management Team on a six monthly basis.

6. Public Consultation

- 6.1** Consultation was carried out through the Limehouse website, and through direct contact with partners, representative equality groups and other key stakeholders. The consultation was carried out at no cost to the Council.
- 6.2** The CES was received very favourably by the Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group with high regard for the Councils approach and commitment to fair and accessible services and encouraging communities to participate.
- 6.3** All respondents agreed with the 6 objectives.
- 6.4** Several comments were made that were specific to services and functions and will be made available to those Managers with responsibility for these areas.

7. Finance Comments

- 7.1** Service areas will be directly responsible for identifying and addressing inequalities, unfair outcomes and promoting diversity. The resource implications of Equality Action Plans should be considered by service areas as part of their budget setting process.
- 7.2** The Strategy Unit will provide staff time to support services in the implementation of the scheme and to monitor progress against the objectives.
- 7.3** Resources are made available from the Voluntary Sector Budget (Strategy Unit) to commission services from the Forum for Equalities and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS) and Compass Disability to provide opportunities for community engagement.
- 7.4** Resources will be allocated from the corporate training budget to provide Equalities and Diversity training for staff, managers and members.
- 7.5** A Peer Assessment is required to prove the Councils achievement of reaching the 'Achieving' level of the Equalities Framework for Local Government. The budget implication of this currently stands at £5000.
- 7.6** There is a further option to enlist a consultant to carry out a mock assessment which would not enable us to hold the recognised award but would give the Council direction on further work to be done to reach this level. The budget implication of this is around £3500 (based on figures supplied by a partner authority carrying out a mock assessment).

7.7 The final option would be to remove the target as a performance indicator and objective of the CES.

8. Thematic Working

8.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme supports thematic working as the approach mainstreams Equalities into projects as well as specific service areas. Equality Impact Assessments can be carried out as part of a project which may cut across services and/or partnerships.

9. Legal Comments

9.1 Completing Equality Impact Assessment and working toward the achievement of the CES objectives will ensure the Council is complying with its statutory public duties and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

10. Links to Corporate Aims

10.1 The CES supports all Corporate Aims, especially Deprivation where inequalities in life chances are faced by many people within our most deprived areas. The objectives within the CES will give direction to Corporate Aims Delivery Plans to ensure that actions carried out to reduce inequalities.

11. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

11.1 Achievement of the objectives within the CES will help to identify the inequalities faced by our service users in life chances, security and crime levels. By continuing work with partners and understanding and engaging with our communities the Council can help to reduce incidents of Crime and Anti-Social behaviour.

12. Equalities Impact

12.1 See Appendix A

12.2 No negative implications for any group. Achievement of the objectives should ensure positive outcomes for all members of our community.

13. Risk Management

13.1 Potential risk to reputation of the authority if found to be discriminatory and not complying with public duties, the objectives within the scheme will help to ensure the Council is complying with its public duties and equalities legislation.

- 13.2 The reputation of the Council will be enhanced by the Council becoming accredited to 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government
- 13.3 Risk that Service Managers do not refer to the CES and Equality Impact Assessments during service planning.

14. Partnership Implications

- 14.1 There will be opportunity and need to work closely with our Partners within South West One, the Voluntary Sector and other partner organisations. Achievement of the objectives will be supported by Somerset Equality Officers Group.
- 14.2 All opportunities will be taken to carry out community engagement in partnership with NHS, Avon and Somerset Police and Devon Fire Rescue Service and our neighbouring Local Authorities.

15. Recommendations

- 15.1 That the Executive approve the Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 – 2013 for adoption.
- 15.2 That the Executive consider the budget implications for the peer assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government.

16. Contact: Lisa Redston
Strategy Officer
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01823 356568

Appendix A - Impact Assessment form and action table

What are you completing this impact assessment for? E.g. policy, service area	Corporate Equality Strategy 2010-2013
Section One – Aims and objectives of the policy /service	
<p>To state the Councils commitment to Equalities and Diversity and how the Council will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination</p> <p>To set the Councils objectives over 3 years for closing gaps in equalities for service users, non service users and employees</p>	
Section two – Groups that the policy or service is targeted at	
All service and non-service users, staff, Members, key stakeholders, partners.	
Section three – Groups that the policy or service is delivered by	
All members of TDBC staff and Members	
Section four – Evidence and Data used for assessment	
<p>See page 6 and 7 of the CES 2010-2013.</p> <p>The CES aims to encourage services and project managers to understand their service and non-services users and communities and the inequalities they may face.</p> <p>Individual service areas/projects will use data from National, Local and partner sources. Service user data, equality monitoring data for their service users, feedback and consultation comments to help to identify inequalities within their services, or inequalities in outcomes of strategies and plans and projects. This data will be used to inform Equality Action Plans and project plans.</p>	
Section Five - Conclusions drawn about the impact of service/policy/function on different groups highlighting negative impact or unequal outcomes	

There are many benefits to working towards the objectives of the Scheme both to the public, especially our most vulnerable communities, and the Council, and little negative impact on any specific equality group has been identified

The Scheme is inclusive of all equality groups that are protected by legislation and a wider range of individuals that may suffer disadvantage.

There is a potential risk to all equality groups if the Council does not take guidance from the document and if that progress towards reducing inequalities for our service users is not monitored and implemented.

There is a potential risk to all equality groups due the lack of a dedicated budget for effective engagement with diverse groups with diverse needs and budget to provide additional services for vulnerable people, such as translation.

However if Service Managers and project leads plan effectively and consider equalities issues there are mid long term financial benefits. If services are delivered in an accessible way, there will be less demand on officers and resources due to less repeat contact, less enforcement etc. Also if the Council works effectively with the Private and Third sector to support vulnerable people there will be reduced demand on our services, potentially freeing resources.

These resources could the be used to carry out proactive engagement and make improvements to our services where we are discriminating against any particular group or individual to ultimately improve the lives of disadvantaged people.

Section six – Actions to be taken

Ensure that the objectives of the Scheme are being achieved through regular monitoring of Service plans, CAD plans and Equality impact assessments.

Signed: Person/Manager completed by		Signed: Group Manager/Director	
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Foreword

Taunton Deane Borough Council is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity throughout its functions for four key reasons:

Firstly, because 'equality' translates to 'quality'. If we conduct all our activities in a fair way anticipating and removing barriers that might impede the needs and interests of our diverse communities, we will improve the overall quality of our service.

Secondly, that it is morally right to adopt an approach that supports the elimination of discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for all.

Thirdly, because equality legislation places a range of requirements on employers and service providers to meet their legal duties.

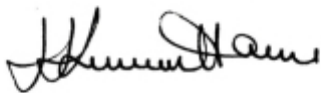
And finally TDBC, as an organisation, benefits from the diverse culture, knowledge and experience brought by our staff and service users.

This Corporate Equality Scheme presents our approach to ensuring equal life chances for all and sets out clear equality objectives for the next 3 years.

We look forward to the challenges ahead.



Penny James
Chief Executive and
Champion of Equality



Cllr Joanna Lewin-Harris
Deputy Leader and
Portfolio holder for Equality



Purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme

Taunton Deane Borough Council remains committed to promoting equality, recognising and valuing diversity, and respecting the principles of human rights.

We believe that everyone in our local communities has the right to be safe and protected from harm, to be treated fairly and with dignity, to live the life of choice, and to take an active part in the community. This means that everyone should have equal access to our services and the right to be treated fairly by those services.

The purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) is to

- demonstrate the need to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the needs of our service users and employees
- gather the Council's commitments under one comprehensive document
- provide the basis on which each service can develop meaningful Equality and Diversity Action Plans
- set out how the Council will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of
 - disability
 - gender
 - ethnicity or national origin
 - sexuality
 - age
 - religion
 - transgender status

If we are to continue to make improvements we must set clear equality targets and actions that are monitored for progress. The measurements of delivering a successful Corporate Equality Scheme will be:

- No significant disparity in accessibility to services
- No significant disparity in service user satisfaction
- No significant disparity in public confidence
- No significant disparity in service outcomes
- No significant disparity in employee satisfaction and perception
- More representative workforce

Vision, Business Principles and Core Values

The councils' Vision, Business Principles and Core Values incorporate our commitment to fairness and respect. The Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013 helps to develop these by establishing a framework within which we can embed equality and promote diversity within our services.

Vision

Taunton Deane will be recognised nationally as a place that is developing sustainability, securing a better life and future for its people, businesses and communities.

Business Principles

We have established four essential principles which support our Vision and help make it happen:

Excellent services – ensuring the delivery of accessible high quality services that provide good value for money.

Customer driven – putting the needs of individual customers at the heart of all that we do.

Local focus – making a positive difference to quality of life in communities across Taunton Deane.

A dynamic organisation – innovative, forward looking and focused on results.

Core Values

We have developed a set of Core Values with our staff and Councillors. These reflect our fundamental beliefs as an organisation and will guide how we deal with our staff, customers and partners. Our Core Values are:

Integrity – we will be honest, do what is right and stick to it

Fairness – we will consistently treat everyone equally, respecting their individual needs and abilities.

Respect – we will always show respect for everyone.

Trust – we will show trust and confidence in our staff and Members.

Involving our service users

The Disability Act 2005 placed a duty on public authorities to ensure that people with disabilities contribute to the Corporate Equality Scheme and are encouraged to take part in public life. TDBC recognises that this is good practise and aims to ensure everyone has the chance to contribute regardless of their circumstances. During our period of public consultation we used a variety of sources and methods to ensure that voices were heard.

Consultations

Public consultation took place between April 27th and June 14th 2010.

We carried out internet based consultation, inviting all members of the public, equality groups and key stakeholders (including Unison) to take part and comment on the scheme.

The document was sent to all parish councils and made available in all public buildings, such as Deane House, the Library and our local Community Offices.

We used our regular 'Deane Dispatch' article in the Somerset County Gazette to encourage all members of the public to comment on our services and the objectives of the Corporate Equality Scheme.

We consulted with our staff through the staff survey, performance reviews and feedback, and encouraged staff to comment on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme objectives.

Equality Forums

Various forums such as The Disability Discussion Group, The Gypsy and Traveller forum and Taunton Polish Association were invited to comment and put forward ideas. The internet based consultation was advertised to all equality forums across Taunton Deane. We offered to attend meetings of forums, groups and associations to explain the Corporate Equality Scheme and offer a chance to comment on the objectives of the Scheme. A list of the groups we asked to participate can be found in Appendix A.

Continuing consultation, feedback and engagement

Looking into the future the Corporate Equality Scheme aims to ensure that services regularly engage with their service users through a variety of means including:

- Collecting regular feedback from customers through satisfaction surveys which also ask for diversity background
- Tracking complaints by diversity background
- Annual consultation events with Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS)
- Targeting consultation and using established forums
- Using shared engagement activities across services and partnerships

The results of these activities will help to shape Equality Action Plans for each service area.

Our communities

Taunton Deane is a predominantly rural area with a population of around 107,400 people, with more than half living in Taunton itself. Only one other urban settlement, Wellington, has more than 10,000 inhabitants. The majority of the land area of the Borough is agricultural and sparsely populated, characterised by many small villages and hamlets.

- The gender split for the borough is 51900 male and 55500 female (2006 mid year estimates)
- There were 18,573 people in Taunton Deane living with a limiting long term illness which equates to 18.2% of the population (Health Profile for Taunton Deane, 2006)
- Minority ethnic groups in Taunton Deane made up around 1.6% of the population in 2001. However, with changing patterns of movement in society, recent estimates indicate that this figure is 6.3%. 2025 migrant workers registered on the Worker Registration Scheme between May 2004 and December 2009 (Office National Statistics mid year estimates, 2007)
- Spoken languages have changed during the last three years in Taunton Deane. Recent schools data shows that there are now many more children speaking Polish and Portuguese as their first language than Bengali and Chinese (Somerset County Council, Schools data 2009)
- 77,682 Taunton Deane residents gave Christianity as their faith/religion. Other faith/religions were Buddhist (168), Hindu (136), Jewish (69), Muslim (293), Sikh (33) and Other (398). (2001 Census)
- There is no current data available on homophobic offences in Taunton Deane however a recent national survey showed that one in five lesbian and gay people have experienced a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years and one in eight during the last year (Stonewall Gay British Crime Survey, 2008)
- 6 Wards within Taunton Deane fall within the top 25% of most deprived wards in the Country. Deprivation in some wards has worsened since 2004 (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2007)
- Taunton Deane has an older age profile than the South West or Britain as a whole with a population average age of 40.7 years (national average 38.6 years). Projections show that by 2010 38.5% of the residents of Taunton Deane will be over 65 (Office of National Statistics, 2007)
- 31% of Job Seekers allowance claimants in Taunton Deane are between the ages of 18 and 24, this is higher than the national figure of 29.4% (NOMIS March 2010)
- 1283 of JSA claimants are male compared with 436 female claimants (NOMIS March 2010)

Our communities

- There are 137 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pitches in Taunton Deane (TDBC Caravan Count 2010)
- 1168 people in Taunton Deane are registered as or known to be blind, or severely visually impaired (Somerset County Council Adult Social Care 2008)
- Approximately 8 of every 100 people in Taunton Deane claim Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement or Disability Living Allowance. (NOMIS Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement claimants August 2009)

Taunton High Street



Corporate commitment to equality



Taunton Deane Borough Council values diversity and believes that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity in our role as a service provider, policy maker, employer, purchaser of goods and services and elected leader in the local community.

In promoting equality of opportunity, we will oppose all forms of discrimination, barriers to our services and inequalities in life chances. We will consider disadvantage on the grounds of

- disability
- gender
- ethnicity
- sexuality
- age
- religion
- transgender status

We will also consider any other condition or requirement which may place a person or group at a disadvantage such as geographical location, socio-economic status, those who care for others and breast-feeding mothers.

Legislation

The scheme must consider the existing requirements placed upon it by equality legislation. Appendix B sets out what these duties are. The principal equalities legislation is as follows:

Race

The Council's legal duties in terms of employment and as a public body are embodied in the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 identifies how employers and service providers must take account of the requirements of people with disabilities. The Disability Act 2005 places a duty on public bodies to eliminate discrimination and promote equality between people with disabilities and those without.

Gender

Gender legislation includes the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and, most recently, the Equality Act 2006, which imposes a duty on public bodies to eliminate discrimination and promote equality between men and women.

Corporate commitment to equality

Other

Other recent equality legislation includes The Human Rights Act 1998, Gender Recognition Act 2004, Civil Partnership Act, 2005 and Article 13 (EC Treaty) Employment and Race Directives 2003 which sets out that employees must not be treated differently due to their sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age.

New legislation

The new Equality Act strengthens current legislation and adds further duties on Local Authorities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all 7 equality strands. These are Race, Age, Disability, Gender, Sexual orientation, Religious Faith or Belief and Transgender. The Single Equality Bill also requires Local Authorities to consider the needs of those with caring status, breast feeding mothers, pregnant school girls and young mothers and those whose socio-economic status may put them at a disadvantage.

The Equalities Framework for Local Government

To help us achieve our aims the Council is committed to delivering services in line with The Equalities Framework for Local Government. This framework provides a guide for local authorities to ensure they are providing equal outcomes for service users and employees.

The Equalities Framework for Local Government uses a wider definition of equality:

“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.”

This definition is more aspirational than the formal legal definitions of equality. It is about what we can do to create a fairer society and recognises that:

- Equality is an issue for us all
- We don’t all start from the same place
- To create a fairer society we need to recognise different needs

TDBC is committed to this aspiration and to gaining its first Equalities Framework for Local Government recognition award by April 2011.

Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 Objectives

The authority aims to mainstream equalities throughout all of its services and functions. It is essential that the consideration of the needs of our service users and communities and appropriate responses are grounded within Services. Services must know and understand the people they serve, they must work with their service users to identify inequalities and to plan and deliver their services to reduce or remove these inequalities wherever possible. Services must also promote diversity through their staff and actions.

The aim of the Corporate Equality Scheme is to steer and support Services to take responsibility for meeting the needs of our communities and ensure the authority is meeting its public duties.

The objectives within the scheme have been based on the guidance provided by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The EFLG supports our approach to mainstreaming equalities and allows us to streamline monitoring of both the Corporate Equalities Scheme and the EFLG.

Objective 1: Know our communities and improve engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect equality information on service users (e.g. satisfactions surveys, application forms, complaints and feedback etc) to identify inequalities in service provision and life chances for vulnerable and disadvantage groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with service users and carry out accessible consultation on service delivery to identify inequalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Members to share information on issues faced by our communities
Objective 2: Provide responsive services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, implement and monitor Equality Action Plans
Objective 3: Work with partners to ensure equal access and fair life chances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners on improving the procurement process to promote and monitor Equality and Diversity within the service providers and suppliers we procure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with SW1 to embed Equalities policies and procedures and include SW1 services in EIA programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the grant award and commissioning processes to ensure Corporate Equality objectives are met.

Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 Objectives

Objective 4: Improve challenge and scrutiny
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit regular performance reports to Members for challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a robust process to ensure EIAs are included in all reports to Scrutiny and Executive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to Members and Managers to encourage Scrutiny and enable Challenge
Objective 5: Promote equality of opportunity as an employer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SouthWest One to develop a programme of equalities and diversity training for all employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include equalities considerations as part of the employee performance review process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the workforce to identify the profile of the Councils employees and use the information to identify and reduce or remove inequalities through implementation and monitoring of the workforce strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Workforce Strategy action plan to reduce inequalities for employees
Objective 6: Promote inclusion in the community and participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote diversity in Member representation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community groups in Somerset to promote diversity and encourage participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Community Cohesion Forum to support inclusion of all groups in the community

Implementation and monitoring

Leadership

The Council has established a framework to ensure that equality is integrated in all that we do. The Chief Executive acts as equalities 'champion', working with senior management to ensure that active steps are taken across all services to implement the Equality Scheme. Service Managers will produce Equality Action Plans and implement actions across the services. Most importantly, all employees have a role in implementing and supporting all aspects of equality and diversity.

At elected member level, specific responsibility for overseeing the Equality Scheme rests with the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Community Leadership. However, all Councillors have a responsibility to support the Schemes commitments and detailed objectives.

Implementation

The Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) will be implemented through Equality Action Plans produced by individual services. The actions within these plans will be identified from the

- objectives within the Corporate Equality Scheme
- results of recent equality impact assessments
- listening to the views expressed by staff through the staff survey and staff reviews
- listening to the views expressed by service users and other key stakeholders

Equality Action Plans will be embedded within Service Plans across the authority.

Equality Impact Assessments

We need to understand whether our services and policies are accessible and meeting the needs of everyone. We do this through equality impact assessments.

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a council's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

The EIA focuses on specific groups to try to find out whether or not they are benefiting from a strategy, policy, service, project or function.

These groups stem from the existing legislation that covers discrimination. The groups include:

- disability
- gender
- ethnicity
- sexuality
- age
- religion
- transgender status

We will also consider issues specific to those living in rural and deprived areas, carers and any other group of people that may face disadvantage.

Implementation and monitoring

The groups are not homogeneous and people within these groups have different and individual needs. Many will be members of several groups. Their experience of of discrimination and inequalities can involve a variety of factors.

We also consider people's basic human rights during the EIA process, considering how the service or policy may reflect on the following aspects of peoples lives:

- Longevity
- Health
- Physical Security
- Standard of Living
- Education
- Productive and valued activities
- Individual, family and social life
- Participation, influence and voice
- Identity, expression and self-respect
- Legal Security

We have carried out EIAs on each service area within the last 3 years, with many EIAs being reviewed annually.

The authority has undergone major restructure within the last 12 months and some of our services are now carried out by SouthWest One a joint venture partnership that delivers several support and customer services previously provided in-house. It will be necessary for service areas to revisit impact assessments with changes to service provision in mind.

Alongside the Corporate Equality Scheme, Equality Impact Assessments will help to inform Equalities Action Plans developed by each service area. A schedule of impact assessments can be found in Appendix C.

Monitoring

Individual Service plans will be monitored to ensure that Equality Action Plans are included, and implemented.

As we have aligned the objectives of the CES with the objectives of the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG) we will be able to monitor the progress towards achieving both of these at the same time.

Regular equality progress reports will be produced for the Borough Council's Corporate Management Team and Councillors which will provide an update on the initiatives undertaken and progress against the CES objectives, highlighting any areas for improvement.

Our commitment to reach 'Achieving' level of the EFLG is monitored as a performance indicator as part of the councils ongoing performance management process.

Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

The Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 recognises that there are still areas in which we need to increase our efforts to move forward, however there has been notable progress over the last 3 years that demonstrates that the communities we serve are benefiting from changes to and improvements on our equality practises. For example, a Translation Policy has been introduced which provides guidance to all service areas when dealing with requests for documents and information in different languages and formats. The website is compliant with government guidelines on accessibility and many services are working with members of the community to listen to and act on ways in which we can make our services fair and accessible. We have completed Equality Impact Assessments on a wide range of our services and policies which have helped us to make these changes and improvements.

Corporate

- Access statements are now included on all our key documents and communications
- Managers and Lead officers have undergone Equality Impact Assessment training
- Managers have undergone training in producing Equality Action Plans
- Equality Impact Assessments are included in all reports to the members of Corporate and Community Scrutiny Committee and the Executive to give Councillors the information they need to make decisions to help reduce inequalities.
- Information to assess inequalities for specific groups is collected as part of the revised complaints and feedback process.
- A package of hearing loop systems have been purchased and other changes made to signage and layout to improve accessibility in the reception area and meeting rooms
- Democratic Services have introduced several measures to improve access for Councillors and the public. For example, provision of an Induction Loop system in Committee rooms, improved access to meeting rooms for those with mobility needs and specialist IT equipment for a Councillor with no sight. Lowered booths at election stations have been introduced to meet the needs of disabled users
- Several Members have adopted the role of Equality Champions



Human Resources

- Positive measures have been introduced to encourage applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities who are currently under represented in our workforce. For example, vacancies are more widely advertised and the selection process has been reviewed to ensure it is accessible and specific requirements can be met

Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

- The staff survey includes equality monitoring information and equality considerations strongly influence the Workforce strategy and plan
- A good practise guide has been developed for all staff called 'The way we work'. This sets out standards that service users and staff can expect from TDBC regardless of background or specific needs

Growth and Development Theme

- Development Management (planning) have built up good links and works closely with Gypsy and Traveller communities through a Gypsy and Traveller Forum
- Heritage and Landscape services are working with youth and elderly groups and have carried out risk assessments that have led to improved access to all local nature reserves and some public rights of way
- The Building Control service has built good relationships with a Disability Group helping to promote the service and increase understanding of regulations

Multi Use Games Area



Community Services Theme

- Extensive work to promote diversity and reduce inequalities by Leisure Services through close work with equality groups in the design of strategies and leisure facilities.
- Food safety training carried out jointly with Sedgemoor District Council in Bengali and Mandarin (held in Bridgwater but promoted to TDBC businesses)
- Premises Inspection Officers have access to a range of leaflets produced by central government in many languages and are proactive in translating correspondence where it is known that the recipient does not speak English.
- Officers visiting premises also make suggestions to improve access for people with disabilities. For example, taxi firms are encouraged to use vehicles that allow disabled access.
- Leisure development grants have enabled greater access for those with disabilities and improved facilities for all age groups using halls and community centres.

Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

- Sports services are ensuring new facilities are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and older facilities adapted to meet the requirements of the DDA where possible. Design also takes account of the needs of different genders and age groups.
- The number of designated disabled parking spaces has been increased. Blue Badge holders are able to park without charge in all Council car parks.

Community Handyman Service



Housing

- Documents have been translated in response to need; the Tenant Pack and handbook have been translated into Polish
- The tenants handbook now makes reference to Equalities and Diversity
- The tenant's forum constitution makes reference to Equalities and Diversity and is responsible for promotion
- Housing teams works closely with other agencies such as Age Concern, Neighbourhood Care, Care Direct and the Police and Fire Service to ensure that initiatives like Safe and Secure, Community Handyman and Home Aids Services are successful and meet the needs of vulnerable residents
- A defined policy for dealing with racial harassment and Tenancy Agreements specifically outlaw harassment on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality and faith
- Crime prevention audits are carried out in all sheltered accommodation to help these tenants feel more secure

Strategy Unit

- Working with SouthWest One to consider and monitor equalities and diversity throughout the procurement process to ensure suppliers comply with Equality legislation
- Supporting the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector. Current funding includes Taunton Deane Disability Group, The Western Boys Association, Taunton Polish Association and rural community transport projects like the Slinky bus service
- Officers contribute to the Partnership Against Racial Harassment, which provides support to victims of race hate crime
- Development of Equality Monitoring forms that can be used by service to collect equalities information during engagement, training and events to assess participation

Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

- Commissioned an equalities group forum (Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset) to carry out engagement work and consultation on our behalf
- The Strategy Unit is engaging proactively with various groups throughout Taunton Deane as part of its consultation process to secure greater representation and involvement of residents. Engagement on the Core Strategy was designed to be fully accessible and promoted among all local Equality Groups, including Compass Disability, the Polish Association and Somerset Gay Health



Direct Labour Organisation

- Continuing work to support disabled people by the provision of a greenhouse at the Nursery to support skills development
- Provision of English mentors for non-English speaking employees and employee information has been translated
- Carried out a wide range of consultation with disability and community groups to influence the design of parks and delivery of services

Appendices

A - Corporate Equality Scheme consultation list

In addition to internal consultation with Councillors and various staff groups the following external organisations were also given the opportunity to provide input to the development of the Corporate Equality Scheme:

- Anglo Chinese Society
- Age UK
- Bangladeshi Association
- Connexions
- Halcon Children's Centre
- Hillside Children's Centre
- Holway Children's Centre
- Mendip District Council
- MENCAP
- NHS Carers' Group
- Somerset Access and Inclusion Network
- Somerset Association for the Blind
- Somerset 2BU
- Somerset Black Development Agency
- Somerset Chinese Association
- Somerset College of Arts & Technology
- Somerset County Federation of Women's Institutes
- Somerset Gay Health
- Somerset Multi-Cultural Forum
- Somerset Race Equality Council
- Somerset Rural Women's Network
- Somerset Sight
- Standing Conference of Women's Organisations
- Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust
- Taunton Bangladeshi Association
- Taunton Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Taunton Deane Sheltered Housing Forum
- Taunton Dyslexia Group
- Taunton Interfaith Group
- Taunton Polish Association
- Taunton Voluntary Action
- Taunton Women's Gypsy Group
- Taunton Women's Refuge
- The Albemarle Centre
- Unison

Appendices

B - General and specific duties for Race, Disability and Gender

Public bodies have a duty to produce a Scheme to meet their duties under Race and Disability and Gender.

- Disability Equality Scheme - DES
- Gender Equality Scheme - GES
- Race Equality Scheme - RES

General Duties			
	DES	GES	RES
Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment	•	•	•
Promote equality of opportunity	•	•	•
Promote good community relations	•		•
Review the scheme every 3 years and assessment of performance in carrying out duties	•		•
Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people	•		
Encourage participation by disabled people in public life	•		
Take steps to take account of a disabled person's disabilities even when this means treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons	•		

Specific Duties			
	DES	GES	RES
Prepare and publish an equality scheme	•	•	•
Assess and consult on likely impact of proposed policies on promotion of equality		•	•
Monitor existing policies for adverse impact on promotion of equality		•	•
Publish results of assessments and consultations		•	•
Ensure public access to information and services provided			•

Appendices

Specific Duties			
Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme and include a statement in the scheme on how this has been done	•		
Train staff in connection with its duties			•
Set out methods for Impact Assessments	•	•	
Set out arrangements for gathering information in relation to employees	•	•	
Set out arrangements for putting the information gathered to use in promoting equality	•	•	
Review scheme every 3 years		•	
Monitor and review progress		•	
Develop, publish and regularly review on equal pay policy		•	

Appendices

C - Schedule of Equality Impact Assessments

The scheme must have due regard to whether a particular function or service may adversely impact on a particular section of society more than the majority. Weight and relevance of each service area or function must be considered. The importance of the function is likely to increase the impact. Similarly, a service may have a high relevance in one or more equality strands but low in others. An essential element of the Corporate Equality Scheme is to require an impact assessment of all of the Councils functions, policies and procedures for all equality strands where they are deemed to have an actual or potential high or medium impact. EIA Guidance and a proforma have been developed to enable staff to undertake impact assessments.

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
Strategy and Corporate				
Democratic Services	•	•		
Overview and Scrutiny	•	•		
Public Relations	•		•	
Communications (internal/external)	•		•	
Marketing	•			
Community Planning and Strategy/LSP	•	•		
Voluntary and Community Sector	•	•		
Land Charges				•
Legal Services				•
Forward Planning	•			
Local Development Framework				•
Housing Strategy				•

Appendices

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
Growth and Development				
Building Control	•	•		
Development Control	•		•	
Economic Development and Tourism	•			
Economic Development Strategy				•
Heritage and Landscape	•		•	
Tourist Information Centre	•	•		
Housing Enabling				•
Community and Leisure				
Cemeteries and Crematorium	•	•		
Community Safety	•		•	
Crime and Disorder Partnership	•			
Civil Contingencies – Safe Centres				•
Internal Health and Safety				•
Leisure Development – Com Hall Grants	•	•		
Leisure Development – Green Space Strategy	•	•		
Leisure Development - Allotment Strategy		•		
Leisure Development – Play Pitch Strategy		•		

Appendices

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
Parking - On Street/Car Parks	•		•	
Environmental Health - Communications	•		Combined	
Environmental Health - Internal Referrals	•		(•)	
Environmental Health – Policy and Strategy	•		(•)	
Environmental Health - Premises Inspections	•		(•)	
Environmental Health - Service Requests	•		(•)	
Sports Development Strategy	•		•	
Housing Supported Services				•
Deane Helpline				•
Housing Estate Management	•	•		
Tenants Liaison	•	•		
Void Control	•		•	
Housing Private Sector	•			
Homeless				•
Housing Allocation				•
Licencing				•
DLO				
DLO reform				•
Cleansing	•	•		

Appendices

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
Parks	•	•		
DLO Transport	•	•		
Repairs and Maintenance		•		
Partnerships/Retained Services				
Housing Benefits	•		•	
Council Tax and Business rates	•		•	
Customer Services	•		•	
Financial Services	•	•		
Human Resources - Recruitment	•		•	
Human Resources – Employee Development	•		•	
Information Services				•
Asset management – Right to Buy	•			•
Asset Management - Leasing				•
Facilities Management				•
Office Services				•
Procurement Process				•
Corporate Complaints	•	•		
Somerset Waste Partnership	•		•	

Appendices

D - Links to other corporate documents

TDBC Corporate Strategy 2010-2013

The Corporate Strategy outlines what kind of organisation we want to be and the key activities that will help us achieve our priorities to improve quality of life and make a positive difference in our communities. The Corporate Strategy establishes the Councils Vision, Business Principles and Core Values which are set out on page 6 of this Scheme and incorporate our commitment to fairness and respect. The Corporate Strategy has been through an Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure that its aims will not discriminate and will help to remove inequalities in our communities.

Equality Policy

TDBC has a comprehensive Equality Policy, which is reviewed annually (last update June 2009). It makes clear our commitment as an employer, service provider, purchaser of goods and services and elected leader in the community. In addition it sets out the support measures we have put in place to deliver the policy, along with the key legislation and those who have responsibility for implementing and assisting with all aspects of the policy. The policy can be found on the TDBC website www.tauntondeane.gov.uk.

Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017

Key local organisations and agencies in have come together as the Local Strategic Partnership to produce the Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This establishes an overall vision and set of quality of life priorities. The strategy is developed through public consultation and is underpinned by its commitment to equality, diversity and social cohesion. By delivering the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) the Council will assist in achieving the objectives of the SCS.

Somerset Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement is an action plan that supports the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy. It is a formal agreement between central and local public and voluntary sector agencies. Good performance will release government funding to the local area. The CES will ensure that we are performing well and delivering against our shared targets.

Workforce Strategy

TDBC's service delivery, like other organisations, is provided through the people it employs. The Workforce Strategy provides a framework to consider and address the needs of our employees. The Strategy carefully considers potential inequalities faced by our staff and has been developed with guidance from the Equalities Framework for Local Government.

By making people management integral to our strategic thinking we can ensure that we have a workforce that can deliver our changing service needs. We will do this by using a workforce plan to make sure we have "the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time".

Appendices

E - Glossary of Terms

Diversity... is the concept of valuing difference with a focus on the individual. It is proactive and respects the unique perspectives and experience that individual people from different backgrounds contribute to society

Equal Opportunities... is mainly driven by legislation, so tends to be reactive, and primarily concerned with 'groups' who are under-represented in society due to discrimination

Equality Framework for Local Government... is a framework that has been developed by the iDEA to mainstream equality into all areas of service delivery and employment practices whilst taking into account changing demographics, the CAA and the Single Equality Bill.

Equality Impact Assessment... is a process that involves assessing and anticipating the consequences of policies and strategies on different groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and that we maximise opportunities to promote equalities.

Glossary of Acronyms

CES - Corporate Equality Scheme

CMT - Corporate Management Team

DDA - Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

DES - Disability Equality Scheme

EIA - Equality Impact Assessment

LSP - Local Strategic Partnership

EFLG - Equalities Framework for Local Government

GES - Gender Equality Scheme

PRED - Performance Review and Employee Development

RES - Race Equality Scheme

SCS - Sustainable Community Strategy

SW1 - South West One

TDBC - Taunton Deane Borough Council

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 14 July 2010

Update on the Allotments, Green Space, Play Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategies for Taunton Deane Borough Council

Report of the Strategy Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Catherine Herbert)

Executive Summary

Up to date Strategies with associated Policies are needed to inform the Local Development Framework, identify existing shortfalls in provision and secure the right amount, type and quality of facilities in relation to the anticipated population growth of the Borough and ensure that facilities are developed and managed in the most appropriate way.

This report follows on from four individual reports to Community Scrutiny and Executive in November and December respectively last year at which members:

- Reviewed and Adopted the Strategies including the Visions, Aims, Objectives, Policies and Action Plans;
- Accepted the Strategies as technical documents to be weighed in the decision-making process for the determination of development proposals;
- Approved wider consultation on the Strategies to make them more robust and enable them to be considered for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document;
- Delegated approval of any minor alterations to the Strategy resulting from the consultation and the outcomes for the Action Plan as they were developed to the Executive Councillor for Sport, Parks and Leisure.

The Executive is asked to review this report and reaffirm the adoption of the Strategies.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the progression and changes undertaken, if applicable, to ensure adequate Strategies for Taunton residents and visitors in the future.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council adopted its first Playing Pitches and Green Space Strategies back in 2003 and 2004 respectively. These required updating being six and seven years old, and predating the publication of Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17) which meant no standards were developed and no policy statements were included. In the case of Sports Facilities and Allotments Strategies the Council never had a single comprehensive strategy for them.
- 2.2 The Strategies firstly assessed the quality, quantity and accessibility of provision in the Borough. Secondly they identified and provided policies to address any current and future gaps in provision. Thirdly they provide a coordinated and consistent approach to the managing and planning future provision which enables resources to be directed to areas of priority and to plan for appropriate levels of facilities in connection with new developments.
- 2.3 The Strategies will guide plan-making and be used as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) evidence base; and may ultimately become a Supplementary Planning Document which will develop the current approach to calculating Leisure facilities requirements arising from new developments.
- 2.4 In the course of their production the Strategies have been subject to consultation with key stakeholders, such as the County Sports Partnership (SASP), Tone Leisure, sports clubs, Allotments holders and those on the waiting list, as well as national governing bodies such as Sport England.
- 2.5 Development of the Allotment Strategy was assisted by a Steering Group set up specifically to develop the strategy, propose policy, standards and an action plan.
- 2.6 The strategies were reviewed, approved and adopted at Community Scrutiny on the 17th November and Executive on the 2nd December 2009; and included approval to go out to wider public consultation.
- 2.7 To become part of the LDF it was necessary to consult more widely on the documents to make them more robust to challenge. The consultation process ran from 20th January for eight weeks. It included statutory consultees,¹ other national and regional stakeholders,² local stakeholders and interested parties.³
- 2.8 As a result of the comments received from the consultation there are:

¹ Such as The Environment Agency, Strategic Health Authority and District Councils

² Such as RTPI, Home Builders Federation, Housing Corporation, Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure, DCMS, DCLG, Equalities and Human Rights Commission, County Council, GOSW and construction companies that are active in our area.

³ Such as sports pitch users, voluntary sector, Compass Disability Services, Equalities Forum and Parish Councils.

- No amendments to the substance of the Allotment Strategy.
- No amendments to the substance of the Green Space Strategy.
- Amendment to calculation of rugby and hockey pitch capacity in the Playing Pitch Strategy. This is a technical alteration following advice from Sport England, the statutory authority and producer of the Model used to make the calculations. The result is that the strategy now shows a slight deficit in the number of junior rugby pitches at peak times and a slight reduction in the surplus of available hockey surfaces. All other pitches remain in their original deficit or surplus category. No changes to key findings, considerations, standards, policies and actions.
- Amendment to Sports Facilities Strategy future requirements list to reflect the technical alteration in calculation of rugby and hockey pitch capacity in the Playing Pitch Strategy. The standards, policies and actions remain unchanged.

3. Policy Context

3.1 National

Whilst there is no current primary legislation that specifically requires the preparation of a Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy, Planning Policy Guidance 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG 17 July 2002) makes clear that local authorities should undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreation facilities, robust assessments of existing and future needs, and set local provision standards.

Section 13 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of its area or the planning of its development.

Planning Policy Statement 12 (paragraph 4.8) requires that Local Development Documents must be based on a robust and credible evidence base. Policies should be founded on a thorough understanding of the needs of the area. For this purpose the Council should prepare and maintain an up to date information base on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of their area, to enable the preparation of a sound spatial plan meeting the objectives for sustainable development.

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes provision for developer contributions in association with new developments and Circular 05/05 clarifies the requirements for such contributions. This includes a requirement for contributions to be appropriate to the impact of the development. To this end it is necessary to establish standards of provision for leisure based on robust evidence. The report provides such an evidence base.

3.2 Local

There is much local policy which aspires to achieve well-being outcomes for the community which the Council is charged with delivering. The Strategies could deliver on these benefits if managed and developed appropriately for example:

- The **Sustainable Community Strategy** for Taunton Deane has as part of its vision; *all residents will have convenient access to a range of recreation and leisure facilities.*⁴ This is supported by the Priorities.

Priority 9 - To Promote and enable healthy lifestyles.⁵

Priority 12 - To improve the provision of leisure...opportunities.⁶

- The Strategies contribute to meeting all the four **Corporate Strategy Aims**⁷ by promoting and creating active; inclusive and sustainable communities.

- **Comprehensive Area Assessment and Local Area Agreement.** Performance indicators which contribute to these two monitoring programs include:

National Indicator 8 - Adult participation in 30 minutes, moderate intensity sport.

National Indicator 121 - mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75.

- **PCT Strategic Framework for Improving Health** and staying healthy aims to reduce obesity promote physical activity across all ages.⁸
- The **Local Development Framework** is an opportunity to plan new communities effectively, allocate new land for facilities and levy a charge on developments which through circumstance of size or location aren't able to provide provision within the development. The levy could also go some way to providing capital investment in improving existing sites.

4. Implications

4.1 Key Decision

Adoption of the Strategies as technical documents is a key decision that will:

⁴ Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017, Pg 5

⁵ Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017, Pg 26

⁶ Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017, Pg 33

⁷ Taunton Deane Corporate Strategy 2010-2013

⁸ Strategic Framework for Improving Health in Somerset 2009/10– 2013/14, published by Somerset Primary Care Trust October 2008

- Inform the preparation of policy
- Inform the decision making process for the determination of development proposals
- Provide adequate supply of facilities for current and future populations
- Improve the over all quality of facilities
- Improve participation and satisfaction levels
- Achieve accessible distribution off facilities

4.2 **Policy**

It is clear from national legislation that local authorities are required to provide robust and credible evidence base of need and set local provision standards to address sports, recreation and open space provision. This enables the Council to plan and make provision for future sports facilities through developer contributions, partnership working and national funding streams.

4.3 **Corporate Objectives and Council Priorities**

Approval of the strategies is working towards production of Taunton Deane's Local Development Framework which is a Council priority; as well as meeting its Corporate Aims on Tackling Depravation, Regeneration and Climate Change.

The Strategies have at their core; policies for best practice management, accessibility, safety, enhancement, facility provision, engagement and education, all of which are contributing to the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives.

4.4 **Financial**

The policies developed within the strategies are supported by an action plan. These will require investment in facilities and a re-allocation of existing resources to deliver on the priorities identified by the Strategy. Sources of funding are identified by the strategy; some will arise from existing and future developer contributions, national and regional initiatives. The strategies highlight partnership, co-location and joint working opportunities.

4.5 **Human Rights**

It is considered that no decision will conflict with the Council's Obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998).

4.6 **Property**

The strategies will deliver a co-ordinated and consistent approach to managing and planning facilities provision which enables resources to be directed to areas of priority and to plan for appropriate levels of facilities in connection with new developments. The reports encompass site audits of all Taunton Deane's key facilities assets and identify where they have greater potential and improvements are desirable or necessary.

4.7 **Risk Management**

Without adopted Strategies the Council is exposed to developer challenges on the provision of facilities. This will impact directly on the improvement of existing and provision of new facilities which in turn affects the health and wellbeing of the population of Taunton Deane.

Without the strategies; facilities provision at best will be haphazard and which will disadvantage our community.

4.8 **Community Safety**

The strategies contain policies around maintaining local facilities and reducing anti social behaviour, focusing on providing positive alternative activity for young people, skills development and engagement in sport.

5. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

5.1 This report has been written considering the positive and negative impacts on the six following equalities groups – Disability, Race, Faith, Gender, Sexual Orientation and Age.

5.2 The strategies were subject of an Equality Impact Assessment prior to their first appearance to Executive on the 2nd December 2009; reducing the likelihood of any unintended discrimination arising from the management of facilities and consequently reducing the council's exposure to claims based on discrimination. No changes to the strategies have required the amendments of the original Equality Impact Assessment.

6. **Groups Consulted**

6.1 As part of the process of producing the Strategies the following consultations have been taken into account;

- Focus groups with the key stakeholders
- Review of the draft documentation by national, regional and local stakeholders and interested parties, statutory authorities, the voluntary sector, disability groups and equalities forum.
- advice was taken from Sport England, the statutory authority
- Public consultation

Planning Policy, Development Management, Economic Development, Estates, Property, Policy and Performance have been consulted at various stages of the Strategies production.

7. Time-scale

- 7.1 Following Executive the Strategies will be published in the corporate style on the Councils website and portal. Paper copies will be produced and be available in reception at Deane House, libraries and community centres. Approval of the provision standards would see them come into effect immediately to be weighed in the decision making process for the determination of development proposals.

8. Justification

- 8.1 The Strategy is needed to ensure that resources are directed in a way that delivers on all the above matters and which contributes to the delivery of key Council and Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Executive is asked to review the report and reaffirm the adoption of the strategies.
- 9.2 The Executive is asked to delegate to the Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure approval of minor amendments to the Strategy resulting from changes in the evidence base and the outcomes of the Action Plan as they develop.

10. Further Information

- 11.1 The draft Strategies will be posted on the Member's Portal along with the Equalities Impact Assessments.
- 11.2 Strategy Officer contact details: Ann Rhodes - a.rhodes@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 14 July 2010

Mercury Filtration and New Cremators

Report of the Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager and Registrar

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Kenneth Hayward)

1. Executive Summary

1. The Council has tendered for three New Cremators and Mercury Abatement Equipment for Taunton Deane Crematorium. As a result four tenders were received and these have been reviewed.
2. The crematorium is a "listed" building and a busy service. The council tender requested that the equipment be fitted within the existing building and that the crematorium remain operational throughout the installation period.
3. Four tenders have been received and reviewed, with one tender clearly superior to the other three.
4. Tender 1 was priced much higher than the other three both in terms of equipment and service maintenance costs. Their tender also required a major extension to the crematorium building; this would have increased the overall project costs by approximately £100,000.
5. Tender 2 designs located ALL of the abatement plant onto the crematorium flat roof; this of course is not conducive to the listed building status as it would be highly visible from a wide area. This was the lowest priced bid.
6. Tender 3 provided the most comprehensive tender and provided the only response to comply with the requirement to house the majority of the equipment within the existing building. They are currently the market leader to both the public and private sector and their equipment is operational locally at both Bath and Exeter crematoria.
7. The majority of the award criteria supplied by this company is superior to the other tenders.
8. This supplier has provided a timetable for installation between March and November 2011, which is ideal for the crematorium service as it covers the quieter summer period with long daylight hours enabling more work to be completed after funeral services have finished.
9. Tender 4 submitted an inferior bid with major omissions such as technical drawings and details of service provision.

2. Background

- 2.1 Taunton Deane Crematorium carries out 2200 cremations per annum. The crematorium is a great asset to the Council. It was built in 1963 to a very high specification and is truly an outstanding example of this type of facility. In fact, the building has been listed due to its architectural interest. The crematorium is currently equipped with three Joule cremators installed and maintained by Furnace Construction.
- 2.2 Emissions from crematoria have been regulated under Part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 since 1991. These controls have not, however, addressed emissions of mercury from crematoria. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Government's PG5/2 legislation has addressed the issue and it is estimated that in the absence of intervention, emissions of mercury from crematoria would rise by two-thirds from 2000 to 2020. In response to this DEFRA consulted the industry on the introduction of gas cleaning equipment to remove mercury emissions.
- 2.3 Due to the prohibitive cost on smaller crematoria of this equipment a compromise approach has been agreed, whereby 50% of cremations will be abated for mercury by 2012. The Council has taken the decision to fully comply with the requirements of DEFRA and Government's PG5/2 legislation.
- 2.4 Abating 100% of cremations annually, Taunton Crematorium will join a national emissions trading scheme for crematoria and receive an estimated £30,000 in the first year of trading from those crematoria that are not abating. The CAMEO scheme is being administered by the Federation of British Burial and Cremation Authorities.
- 2.5 Since 1 April 2006 Taunton Deane Crematorium has been saving £35 per cremation towards the purchase of mercury filtration equipment. To date well over £300,000 has been reserved for this project. Tenders were sought for filtration equipment but varied in price and quality and all required an extension to the building which if accepted would have added an additional £100,000 (guide price) to the project.
- 2.6 In view of this the Council decided to re-tender this time for three new cremators and mercury filtration equipment, requiring manufacturers to provide a solution whereby the equipment installed would not require a building extension. This decision has previously been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee on 21 July 2009 and the Executive on 16 September 2009. Amongst a wide range of criteria, including comprehensive long-term servicing quotations and the requirement of a larger cremator, tenders were sought.

2.7 Procurement was carried out under the “open procedure” in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations. The OJEU Notice was published on the 8 April 2010 with a closing date for the submission of tenders on the 4 June 2010. Tenders have now been received and evaluated against the pre-established scoring template.

3. Tenders Received – For Three Cremators and Mercury Abatement

3.1 Purchase Price – details of manufacturer and quotation.

Manufacturer	Supply of Three New Cremators and Mercury Abatement	Servicing Over 5 years and maintenance
Tenderer 1	£1,192,250	£376,050
Tenderer 2	£989,960	£322,000
Tenderer 3	£1,020,937	£312,883
Tenderer 4	£993,000	£250,000 excludes spares and key equipment.

3.2 Tenders were assessed against the criteria outlined below. Whilst the preferred bidder submitted the only tender that complied with our primary requirement to house the equipment in the existing building we continued to assess all of the bids to ensure fair treatment of all bidders and to confirm the competitiveness and the technical feasibility of the preferred bid.

3.3 Given that there was only one compliant response we revisited our requirement to ensure that we had not compromised operational performance.

3.4 Award Factor/Criteria – decision factors and percentages awarded.

Award Factor	Criteria	Percentage
Overall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstration of understanding of the requirement. 2. Overall quality of the submission. 	5%
Technical Proposal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation that all information has been supplied. 2. An Assessment of the technical proposal from a design, operational, efficiency and innovation perspectives. 3. Confirmation that all the aspects of the Specification have been complied with. 	20%

	<p>4. An assessment of all the integration into the existing building.</p> <p>5. Warranties.</p>	
Award Factor	Criteria	Percentage
References	References have been requested regarding contractors performance in respect of design, supply & maintenance of the Plant and Equipment. At least one reference must relate to a site where the tenderer has fully installed new cremators, abatement equipment and control systems.	10%
Quality Management (Installation and Maintenance)	An assessment of the tenderers ability to manage and deliver a high quality service and products from contract award, through design, installation and commissioning to post installation service and maintenance.	10%
Contract and Relationship Management.	An assessment of how the contract will be managed and how the contractor will manage the relationship with the Council and the Building Works Contractor.	5%
Tender Price	This will include all costs associated with the design, installation and commissioning of the Plant and Equipment, associated works and control Equipment.	24%
Maintenance Costs	All servicing and maintenance costs over the working life of the equipment including parts, labour, planned and reactive maintenance, callouts etc.	8%
Energy Efficiency and lifecycle costs.	Energy efficiency. Total operating cost of the working life of the equipment.	8%
Maintenance and Service Provision	To include; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation that all information requested has been supplied. 2. An assessment of the service level agreements submitted. 3. An assessment of the proposed maintenance package including, innovation, flexibility and completeness. 4. Assessments of the systems 	10%

	<p>durability – estimated life, service intervals, spare part requirements etc.</p> <p>5. An assessment of the level of technical support.</p>	
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- 3.5. All building modifications and civil works have been excluded from the tender submissions as requested. The proposal from Tender 3 requires the least amount of building works, but this will require costing. It appears that the works required could be undertaken by the Deane DLO.
- 3.6 The current gas supply is sufficient to supply the proposed new cremators.
- 3.7 The current electrical supply has to checked to see if upgrading is required.
- 3.8 The preferred Tenderer achieved the highest score against all of the award factors (references still to be sought).

4. Finance Comments

- 4.1 **Please Note: Below in italics is an extract from the report to the Executive of 16 September 2009. It is included to give Members an overview of the financial aspects; of course further savings have taken place since this time. Tenderer 3's price is £1,020,937. So an additional £21,000 plus building works needs to be included.**

The Council is currently saving £35 per cremation towards this project.

The cost will be £1,000,000 with £230,000 already in an earmarked reserve leaving a requirement for £770,000. The life of the asset will be 15 – 20 years.

The interest cost would be approx 5%£770,000=£38,500 per annum and the MRP would be £770,000/20 years = £38,500k, therefore £77,000 per year.*

Note: *The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) assumes that the Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (which has been making up the £230,000) stops in 2011/2012 and this just happens to be £77k.*

The MTFP will need to be adjusted from 2011/2012 onwards as it currently assumes that the £35 would drop at that point.

4.5 It is estimated that £30,000 of income can be received through the first year of trading through the CAMEO trading scheme. This will decrease annually as more crematoria install abatement equipment.

5. Legal Comments

On completion of the procurement process the successful response to the “invitation to tender,” the specification and the terms and conditions of contract will be passed to the Legal Team to draft the contract documents.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

Climate Change. Our analysis provides an assessment of lifecycle costs. This shows a reduction in gas consumption over the existing equipment. The installation of this equipment will also provide cleaner air and reduce mercury emissions.

6. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

The project will be managed within Health and Safety guideline.

8. Equalities Impact

None identified.

9. Risk Management

A Health and Safety assessment has been undertaken of all the technical proposals.

10. Partnership Implications

Southwest One are providing purchasing support and a “request for service” has been submitted for an architect, a clerk of works, mechanical and electrical engineer and structural engineer to take the project forward.

11. Recommendation

It is recommended that subject to satisfactory references, the Executive accepts the tender of Tenderer 3 (Facultatieve Technologies) for the supply of three new Cremators and a TRIPLE Mercury Abatement System together with ancillaries.

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 14 July 2010

Allocation of Growth Points Funding

Report of Project Taunton Director (Ian Franklin) and Strategic Director (Joy Wishlade)

(This is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Background

Growth Point Funding is partnership funding between Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council which has funded the capital elements of the work of Project Taunton. We received indicative funding announcement last year for 2010/2011 of £2,243,000 capital and £300,698 revenue. Towards the end of March we received the revenue amount for the coming year but still wait to hear if the capital funding will be forthcoming. With recent announcements from the new coalition government we believe that it is extremely unlikely that it will be forthcoming – and almost certainly not in its entirety. We last reported to members on a re-profile of the Growth Points spend in October 2009. Now we are fairly certain of reduced income we would like to update this.

2. Proposal

2.1 Revenue:

It is suggested that the revenue continues to support the Delivery Team for Project Taunton – the delivery mechanism for which this funding is given. If no further funding is found the Delivery Team is funded through until approximately December 2011.

2.2 Capital:

If we assume that further funding will be very difficult to find and that the delivery team potentially has a finite existence, we feel very strongly that in these circumstances we must plan to do the maximum we possibly can to ensure that the basic ingredients for the growth of Taunton are put in place during this period. By this we mean the links around the town and associated public realm, the basis for a retail scheme, a deliverable Firepool as far as possible and other smaller projects, as well as masterplanning the growth of Taunton which is already in our programme.

Attached is a spreadsheet showing expected and suggested expenditure of the remainder of the New Growth Points capital funding allocation for Taunton (App

A). Also attached is the table showing the use of Growth Points funding that was agreed by the Executive in October last year (App B) so that you can see the changes that are suggested. The latter shows an income in 2010/ 2011 that we are now discounting. Some spend in line with this approved plan has been made and is identified in the commentary below. Below the line is the suggested budget/plan for the 2010/2011 allocation if this is received.

A commentary of each item using the numbering follows:

1. This is the capital amount received to date – some of which is already committed to projects which are identified below.
2. This is income from the Department for Transport to Somerset County Council for flood relief works for the Third Way. The work had already been carried out by Project Taunton, so this was the financial contribution.
3. We are committed to finishing this project which will provide a unique country park facility on the edge of the town centre. It will also provide safe walking and cycling routes (with 2 new bridges) from French Weir Park to Somerset College and Silk Mills.
4. We are currently negotiating the final fee account with LDA and hope that this amount will be reduced.
5. Although without the 2010/2011 funding it will be impossible to undertake the whole of the Castle Green project, we feel that we must do something in Castle Green to provide a better landscape for the Museum and provide the link with Goodland Gardens and the riverside paths. Indeed it was one of the stipulations of the Heritage Lottery Grant to SCC that the surrounding area was improved. This is an allocation of funds and we will now be investigating what bits of the approved plan can be undertaken.
6. This is a contingency for future work. We would not be expecting to use it but having provided key public space it would be prudent to have some contingency available.
7. This work is underway and the funding committed. It is key to enabling growth to occur in the best way possible for Taunton and will enable a sound Core Strategy to be prepared.
8. These points are not yet installed but should continue to be a priority to back up our sustainability agenda.
9. This funding is committed and the work is underway.
10. This is a sum of £150,000 for planning and development advice and also £125,000 which is the maximum sum TDBC would be contractually obliged to repay to the developer if the project was halted by TDBC. The work on this is ongoing and the funding committed.
11. This is a fee budget for the design and marketing of phase one at Coal Orchard. We are advised that there is a market for A3 units in this location by the riverside, and would like to pursue a project (subject to approval by Taunton Deane) to support the retail offer at this end of the town.
12. This is committed and costs have been incurred and relates to public realm, master planning and phase one.

13. This is committed and has been spent.
14. This is committed and has been spent. It was the top up amount for the purchase of this unit – the main bulk of funding being provided by the HCA and agreed by Executive.
15. This figure includes £80,000 for the demolition of the engine sheds (already agreed and spent) and £500,000 towards purchase of third party properties in Priory Bridge Road to enable the first phase of development to take place, plus the public realm that is required for the first phase. St Modwen estimate that £700,000 will be the actual amount required however we wish to see what savings / investment they can find. Should we need to put more money in then we will try to find it from savings from other items rather than compromise our contingency.
16. This is the link across Bridge Street to connect Coal Orchard with Goodland Gardens. The sum includes our estimate of building a cantilevered footway from Goodland Gardens to the bridge to enhance what is now a very sub standard and narrow footpath and possibly the removal of some bridge panels to allow direct access to the bridge from the gardens.. This is a very important link which could be left out for ever if we do not carry out the work.
17. This is our very important contingency and before we make savings on other items is all we will have left for unidentified projects.
18. This is the £2.23m which is the GP allocation we are assuming we will not receive. If it is received however then we would like the flexibility to look at purchasing the “Coal Yard” in Canal Road to allow the pedestrian/cycle link between the station and the river and/or complete Castle Green to the original or altered specification

3. Financial Comments

The Growth Point funding is a partnership fund between SCC and ourselves. Funding is provided for regeneration (including public realm) and the delivery of housing. It cannot be used for other purposes.

4. Legal comments

Only to reiterate the above point that this funding is legally only available for the purposes that it was given.

5. Links to Corporate Aims

The uses describe above link to Aim 1 Regeneration

6. Equalities Impact

All works carried out will be DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant.

7. Conclusion

The above allocations essentially prioritise the first phase of Firepool, the creation of key linkages within the town, the planning for a new retail scheme and some public realm works. This plan has been discussed with and approved by both the Project Taunton Steering Group and the Project Taunton Board

Given the uncertain nature of Government funding we have concluded that even if Growth Points allocation for 2010/2011 is received, we should follow this new suggested programme as a matter of urgency. If we can't demonstrate positive use of the capital funds in our possession soon then we risk criticism for non delivery and in the worse situation an attempt by central government to recover funds already received. In addition and on a practical front, if the Delivery Team has a limited life then it is important that rapid progress is made and early approval to this new budget/plan is given.

If we do receive the 2010/2011 allocation then we suggest that further approvals should be sought from the Leader and the Leader of the Opposition with delegated powers.

8. Recommendation

The Executive is recommended to approve the Growth Points capital spending plan and the use of the revenue amount to support the Project Taunton Delivery team.

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Appendix A

Capital

Ref.	Item	2009/10		2010/11	
		Income £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000
1	Growth Points allocation	5,619			
2	Misc. Income			524	
3	Longrun Farm/Meadows		0		360
4	Castle Green design		455		100
5	Castle Green construction		0		1,000
6	Somerset Square		289		20
7	Urban extension planning		115		815
8	10 charging points for zero carbon emission vehicles		0		30
9	NIDR		0		825
10	Retail (EPF + £200K)		10		275
11	Coal Orchard architecture and marketing		0		40
12	Firepool planning application		0		250
13	Unit 4 Canal Road (top up)		250		0
14	Unit 5 Canal Road (top up and fees)		45		0
15	Firepool		0		580
16	Bridge Street link		0		300
	Total	5,619	1,164		4,595
17	Balance		4,455		384

18	Purchase of Coal Yard at Firepool/Completion of Castle Green			2.243	2.243
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1 2008/09 c/fwd = £2,281K + 2009/10 allocation = £3,338K

2 £100K remaining from Somerset Square + £424K flood storage capacity from SCC. Further receipt anticipated from sale of 64 PBRoad circa £175,000 (not included).

3 Landscaping including bridge installment, green cathedral and oak barn

4 & 5 Sum adjusted to allow bridge link and landscaping around its landing in Castle Green

6 Additional to S106 (£23K for play and outdoor recreation)

Appendix A

15 Third party properties and public realm + £80K demolition

16 Removal of bridge panels with improved access to Goodland Gardens and cantilevered walkway to Coal Orchard

18 Unexpected receipt of Growth Points Allocation 2.243 for 2010/2011

Appendix B

APP B Growth Points

Ref.	Item	2009/10		2010/11	
		Income £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000
1.	c/fwd, annual allocation and anticipated allocation	5,619		2,248	
2.	Longrun Farm/Meadows		0		150
3.	Castle Green design		412		100
4.	Castle Green construction		0		3,268
5.	Somerset Square		400		0
6.	Firepool demolition		200		0
7.	Firepool enabling works		400		850
8.	Urban extension planning		300		700
9.	10 charging points for zero carbon emission vehicles		30		0
10.	NIDR		0		1,000
11.	Retail (EPF + £200K)		0		325
12.	Coal Orchard master plan		0		75
13.	Unit 4 Canal Road (top up)		100		0
14.	Total		1,842		6,468
15.	Balance (nil receipt 2010/11)		3,777		-2,691
16.	Balance (proposed receipt 2010/11)		3,777		-443

1. 2009/10 income consists of £2,281,000 carried forward from 2008/09 and the allocation for 2009/10 of £3,338,000. A July 09 letter from CLG, previously circulated, proposed a cut in GP capital funding from £3,972,516 to £2,248,263 for 2010/11.
2. Part payment for Longrun Meadows has been provided via RIF. A sum has been allocated, towards landscaping - a planning condition, for the balance.
4. No Castle Green construction costs will now be incurred in 2009/10 and this project will be reviewed dependent on 2010/11 allocation.
8. Although an allocation of £1million has been agreed for this project, it is unlikely that tenders will come back in excess of £700,000.
10. The completion of the NIDR is fundamental to the delivery of Firepool. As a result of planning and S106 problems, there is a £1million shortfall. This allocation plugs the funding gap, ensuring D of T funding and access to the northern sector of the Firepool site.
11. This sum is made up of up to £125,000 detailed in the exclusivity contract as payment to EPF if TDBC withdraws from the agreement. £200,000 has been allocated for legal and property advice towards signing the agreement.
15. These totals assume no capital funding receipt in 2010/11.
16. These totals assume the proposed capital funding receipt for 2010/11 (see item 1. above)

18/08/2010, Report:Proposed extension of Wellington Cemetery
Reporting Officers:Paul Rayson

18/08/2010, Report:Firepool Compulsory Purchase Order
Reporting Officers:Joy Wishlade

18/08/2010, Report:Quarterly Corporate Performance/Finance Update (Quarter 1)
Reporting Officers:Dan Webb

18/08/2010, Report:Control of parking on TDBC Public Spaces
Reporting Officers:Joy Wishlade

15/09/2010, Report:Review of Essential Users and Car Allowances
Reporting Officers:Martin Griffin

13/10/2010, Report:Approval of Supplementary Planning Document for High Street, Taunton area
Reporting Officers:Tim Burton

10/11/2010, Report:Quarterly Corporate Performance/Finance Update (Quarter 2)
Reporting Officers:Dan Webb

16/02/2011, Report:Quarterly Corporate Performance/Finance Update (Quarter 3)
Reporting Officers:Dan Webb